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ABSTRACT

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Act of 1986 provides funding to school districts to supplement local efforts to eliminate violence and drug and alcohol use by their students. In 1997-98 the Austin Independent School District (AISD) (Texas) received a total of $1,197,750 through SDFSC grants. In the AISD these funds support a variety of student programs, curriculum and staff development efforts, and support staff and services. Data for this evaluation come from many sources and different data collection methods, including student surveys, report forms, interviews, and focus groups. A drug and safety survey given to a sample of students in grades 4 through 12 provided information about student substance use and beliefs. When asked where they received information on drugs and alcohol, most secondary school students reported a variety of school and nonschool sources. About two-thirds of secondary respondents said that they had not participated in any AISD program or activity in the past 2 years. When asked about school safety, most respondents said they felt safe in school. However, 20% reported that they had been harmed or threatened in school in the past year, and 11% reported that they had harmed or threatened someone else. Most respondents to a staff survey said that drugs and alcohol were not problems on their campuses. Program and budget data and responses to student and staff surveys suggest that not all students in the AISD are being served by SDFSC programs. Recommendations are made for program improvement, focusing on prevention and education. Four appendixes contain federal guidelines for SDFSC fund use, the "Principles of Effectiveness" from the SDFSC Act, the district's drug abuse and alcohol education and prevention plan, and summaries of information on AISD SDFSC participants. (Contains 47 tables, 32 figures, and 22 references.) (SLD)

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ED 426 111

# New Directions for a District-wide Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program

## Title IV Evaluation Report 1997-98

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***Overview***

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Act of 1986 provides funding to school districts to supplement local efforts to eliminate violence and to eliminate drug and alcohol use by their students. In 1997-98, Austin Independent School District (AISD) received $671,774 from the SDFSC grant, which included $261,113 that was carried over from 1996-97. Later in the school year, supplemental funds, awarded on a competitive need basis, were granted to AISD in the amount of $525,976. Thus, the total SDFSC funds available to AISD was $1,197,750.

SDFSC grant monies fund a wide assortment of district efforts directed toward prevention of and education about the illegal and harmful use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and toward the prevention of violence. Generally, the grant supports a number of student programs, curriculum and staff development efforts, and support staff and services.

***Methodology***

The information in this report comes from a variety of sources with the use of different data collection methods. Surveys, report forms, interviews and focus groups were used to collect self-report data from students, parents, and staff. Budget allotments and expenditures were obtained through the federal program budget specialist and district finance records. District databases and records provided information on student demographics, academic and behavioral variables, and student offenses. Summaries were compiled for each program. Findings are presented, first, for district-wide surveys, and second, for individual SDFSC programs and activities.

***Major Findings***

Based on a district drug and safety survey given to a sample of students in fourth to twelfth grades, the most commonly reported substance used continues to be alcohol. Tobacco is the second most commonly reported substance used. With some exceptions, student substance use rates tend to increase with grade level.

Most students surveyed recognized the dangers of using certain substances. Yet, one-third of elementary (fourth to sixth graders) and one-fifth of secondary (seventh to twelfth graders) respondents thought tobacco was not dangerous. Few elementary students thought alcohol was not dangerous, but one-fifth of secondary students thought alcohol was not dangerous. Among secondary student respondents, 18% reported heavy use of alcohol in the past month; 13% had gone to class drunk in the past year; 10% reported having driven a vehicle after having had a "good bit to drink" in the past year. Those who reported they had used alcohol had higher average rates of self-reported school absences and conduct problems.

Among secondary student respondents, 35% had seen a family member use alcohol, and 24% had seen a family member use cigarettes. Regarding extra-curricular activities, 25% reported participation in some kind of social after-school activity, and 10% had a job, but 19% did not participate in any activity. When asked about future plans, 62% had plans for going to college, but 12% indicated they had no post-high school plans.

When asked where they received information on drugs and alcohol, most secondary respondents reported a variety of school and non-school sources. Most secondary respondents indicated that if they had a drug or alcohol problem, they would go to friends, their parents, or another adult.

About two-thirds of secondary respondents indicated they had not participated in any SDFSC program or activity in the past two years.

When asked about school safety, most secondary respondents felt safe. Yet, in the past year, 20% reported they had been harmed or threatened, and 11% reported they had harmed or threatened another person.

District discipline and police data indicate that, compared to previous years, drug-related incidence rates (e.g., discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions) have remained at about the same level despite increased total student enrollment, while incidences involving assaults or weapons have decreased.

Despite student drug survey and discipline incidence data, most respondents to a district staff survey indicated that drugs/alcohol and safety are not serious problems on their campuses. Furthermore, staff familiarity with SDFSC programs and activities is relatively low. Relatively few staff respondents have received SDFSC-related training.

SDFSC programs and activities during 1997-98 offered AISD students, families, and staff a variety of prevention, education, and intervention opportunities. However, based on program and budget data, there is some question about whether all students are being served adequately. Some programs and activities are designed to serve a limited or targeted number of students, but campus-based efforts as well as district-wide efforts should be impacting all students.

***Recommendations***

These recommendations are offered for consideration:

1. Based on student survey results, the emphasis in prevention education should be placed on the dangers and consequences of using alcohol and tobacco (as well as inhalants and marijuana).
2. Based on staff survey results, more SDFSC-related education and training opportunities need to be provided to staff.
3. Campus initiatives should be aimed at more students, parents, and community members. Campus SDFSC goals and activities should be aligned with campus improvement plans. When possible, collaboration with other campuses and with community groups is encouraged.
4. The TEA-recommended prevention curriculum should be integrated into all of the district's core curricula. As part of this effort, resiliency and skills training should be offered to students.
5. Continued evaluation of all SDFSC efforts in AISD should include qualitative and quantitative data. In order to track progress towards program goals, students should be followed long-term in order to assess program impact.
6. The district's prevention education plan should be revisited, in light of survey results, incidence data, and current SDFSC programs.
7. The federal regulations, Principles of Effectiveness (1998), will have to be used in guiding all SDFSC program efforts, to ensure the district's program is implemented and evaluated according to stated goals, objectives, and outcomes.

***Budget Implications***

*Mandate*: External funding agency – Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986 (Public Laws 99-570, 100-297, 101-226, and 101-647, Section 5145).
*Funding Amount*:
1997-98 Allocation: $410,661
1996-97 Carry-over: $261,113
Supplemental Award: $525,976
Total Available: $1,197,750
*Funding Source*: Federal

*Implications*:
Continued implementation and evaluation of SDFSC programs are important if AISD is to reach its goal of a safe and drug-free school population by the year 2000. The SDFSC grant supplements efforts toward eliminating student/staff alcohol/drug use that are necessary in order to receive federal funding.

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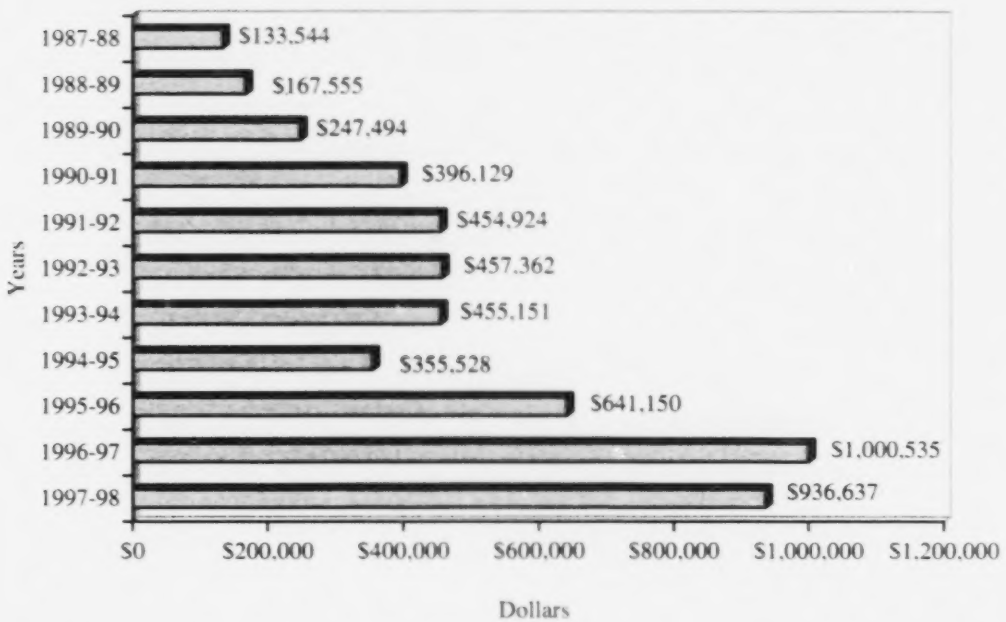
# INTRODUCTION

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) has received federal funding through the Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) grant since the 1987-88 school year. Originating from the Drug-Free Schools Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-570) and subsequent legislative amendments, the function of the SDFSC grant monies is to supplement local school district efforts toward education and prevention of drug abuse and violence. The historical levels of federal assistance to the district, defined as basic allotment awarded each year plus any supplemental funding (not including funds carried over from the previous year), are reflected in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Title IV SDFSC Grant Monies Received by AISD, 1987-88 to 1997-98




*Source: AISD SDFSC Program Records*

For the 1997-98 school year, AISD received a basic formula allotment of $410,661 in federal funds under the terms of the amended SDFSC Act. Also, AISD received a supplemental award of $525,976 as a result of special competitive funding provided to the top 10% of school districts that demonstrated the greatest need in terms of the SDFSC grant application and evaluation. This was the third year that supplemental funds were awarded to the district. SDFSC funds are intended to supplement, but not supplant, district efforts to promote safe and drug-free school environments. These funds supported a wide array of district programs aimed at prevention and intervention, including programs for high-risk youth, the purchase of curriculum materials, and training for students, parents and staff members. Some funds also supported SDFSC program administration and evaluation.

The Drug Free Schools Act of 1986 set forth guidelines on what types of programs are appropriate for funding with SDFSC monies. These guidelines have been amended over the years and appear in the *Nonregulatory Guidance for Implementing Part B of the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986 – November 1992*, and have been updated in the *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994*. The full description of these guidelines and the type of approved programs under which each of AISD's programs fall may be found in Appendix A.

The most recent addition to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act has been the adoption of the U.S. Department of Education's *Principles of Effectiveness* in July 1998. Appendix B includes the complete text of the principles. Briefly, these four principles stress the importance of using:

- needs assessment to clearly define the drug and safety problems in schools and communities;
- measurable objectives to guide the program;
- research- or evaluation-based programs shown to prevent or reduce youth substance abuse and/or violence or one's that have promise of being effective; and,
- periodic program evaluation to refine or update programs.

The basic elements of the principles have guided AISD's SDFSC program. However, there is room for program improvement in all district SDFSC-related activities. At the state and federal level, these principles will be used to evaluate how school districts are spending their federal Title IV funds, and measures of these principles will have a role in determining future funding for districts.

In September 1992, AISD enacted a revised drug and alcohol education and prevention plan (see Appendix C). The revised plan explicitly states that, "The district's goal is to have a drug-free school population by the year 2000". With this goal in mind, the plan identifies the following eight major components to be implemented by AISD:

1. personnel training in alcohol- and drug-related issues;
2. age-appropriate alcohol/drug education and prevention curricula at each grade level;
3. student assistance program to identify, refer, and provide services for students;
4. distribution of information about alcohol/drug programs for students and employees;
5. inclusion of alcohol/drug standards in student discipline policies and employee personnel policies; distribution of these standards to parents, students, and employees;
6. data gathering to describe the extent of alcohol/drug usage in the schools; participation in other required evaluation efforts of the drug prevention program;
7. assurance that all required activities convey to students that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol are wrong and harmful; and,
8. district advisory council composed of individuals who are parents, teachers, officers of state and local government, medical professionals, representatives of law enforcement agencies, members of community based organizations, and other individuals with interest or expertise in the field of drug abuse education and prevention.

To ensure implementation of each component, the plan outlines the specific responsibilities and actions to be taken by central administration, principals, other district staff members, students and parents. The revised plan meets the requirements for a program to prevent the use of alcohol/drugs by students and employees as mandated by the SDFSC Act.

When the plan is fully implemented as intended, the district will have complied with standards mandated by the SDFSC Act.

During the 1997-98 school year, the AISD SDFSC district program continued toward development and improvement of a comprehensive approach to serving students and staff members. Direction given by the AISD SDFSC Advisory Council and the AISD SDFSC Planning Committee was instrumental in this endeavor. Both groups helped clarify needs, goals and objectives of the district's SDFSC efforts. Both groups met monthly and were comprised of district staff (central and campus), students, parents, and community representatives. The Advisory Council is mandated in the SDFSC Act. The Planning Committee was formed during the 1996-97 school year to provide strategic planning, review and redirection to the district's SDFSC programs. Topics addressed in both of these groups included funding, comprehensive program planning, evaluation, and setting goals and objectives. The two groups provided a venue in which different individuals and groups from the district and the community could share ideas and raise awareness of their respective activities.

In compliance with the federal SDFSC Act and with AISD's drug and alcohol education and prevention plan, this evaluation report presents information gathered on the extent of the current drug and alcohol problem in the schools, school safety issues, and AISD SDFSC program efforts. This information was gathered through student and staff surveys and interviews, examination of critical variables in the district's student databases, and specific analysis of data gathered in each SDFSC program.

# ASSESSMENT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND SCHOOL SAFETY

# TEXAS SCHOOL SURVEY OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

## INTRODUCTION

Part of the SDFSC Act requires that education agencies receiving funds describe the extent of the current alcohol and drug problem in the schools. The National Commission on Drug Free Schools Final Report (September 1991) recommends using a survey to assess drug problems in the schools. As a recipient of SDFSC funds, AISD is under obligation to collect and report this information. Two student survey instruments have been used in alternating years since 1992. In 1992, 1994, 1996, and 1998, the *Texas School Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use* (TSSDAU) was administered to representative samples of students in grades four through twelve. The TSSDAU is a multiple-choice survey that is endorsed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and has been used statewide in Texas school districts since 1988. This survey, analyzed by the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A & M University, is sponsored and partially subsidized by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA). An advantage of using TSSDAU is that it allows comparisons with other Texas school districts that participate in the statewide assessment.

In other years (1993, 1995, and 1997), the *Student Substance Use and Safety Survey* (SSUSS), formerly named the *Student Alcohol and Other Drug Use Survey* (SAODUS), has been administered to representative samples of students in grades four through twelve. AISD Office of Program Evaluation staff designed the SSUSS and SAODUS, which provided the advantage of tailoring survey items to the district's evaluation needs. Both the SSUSS and the TSSDAU include the following types of questions: self-report of substance use, attitudes and opinions about usage, actions taken while using certain substances, participation in district SDFSC prevention and education activities, school safety perceptions and experiences, and demographics. Both surveys have two versions, one for elementary level students (grades 4 - 6, TSSDAU; grades 4 – 5, SSUSS, SAODUS), and another for secondary level students (grades 7 – 12 TSSDAU; grades 6 – 12, SSUSS, SAODUS).

Survey administration is designed to take approximately 40 - 55 minutes. *Student participation is completely voluntary and individual responses are anonymous.* No names or identification numbers are used on the surveys to trace individuals. Strict confidentiality standards are adhered to for survey administration, data collection, processing and reporting procedures, with results reported only in summary form and rounded to the nearest percentage point.

## SURVEY SAMPLE

Based on student enrollment for grades four through twelve, a random representative sample of 9,917 students was drawn: 3,427 from elementary grades four through six, and 6,490 from secondary grades seven through twelve. These numbers represent a 21% sample of the total district membership in grades four through twelve at the time the sample was drawn. School campuses were the primary sampling units and classrooms were the sampling subunits. Surveys were sent to 57 of 66 randomly selected elementary campuses and to all 25 secondary campuses (10 high schools, 15 middle schools). Note that AISD sixth graders are enrolled at both

elementary and middle school campuses in the district, and they were surveyed as part of the elementary sample only (and received only the elementary version of the survey).

Only one elementary campus did not return surveys because the survey materials were lost, resulting in a 98.8% response rate by campuses. Completed surveys were sent to PPRI for processing and analysis. PPRI received 2,628 elementary surveys, of which 2,590 were valid for analysis, and 4,568 secondary surveys, of which 4,366 were valid for analysis. The validation process eliminated any surveys in which students had given exaggerated or random answers to survey items, such as use of a fictitious drug substance. Thus, the final elementary sample in the survey response analysis represented 14.9% of the district's students in grades four to six. The final secondary sample in the analysis represented 14.7% of the district's students in grades seven to twelve. A summary of the survey sample's gender and ethnicity is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: 1998 TSSDAU Student Respondent Demographics

| 1998 TSSDAU Survey Sample | Elementary Students (Number) | Elementary Students (Percentage) | Secondary Students (Number) | Secondary Students (Percentage) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | |
| **Females** | 1,324 | 51.3% | 2,253 | 51.9% |
| **Males** | 1,257 | 48.7% | 2,088 | 48.1% |
| **Total*** | 2,581 | 100.0% | 4,341 | 100.0% |
| **Ethnicity** | | | | |
| **African-American** | 431 | 17.2% | 613 | 14.5% |
| **Asian-American** | 31 | 1.2% | 123 | 2.9% |
| **Mexican-American** | 1,012 | 40.3% | 1,418 | 33.6% |
| **Native American** | 44 | 1.8% | 27 | 0.6% |
| **White** | 788 | 31.4% | 1,747 | 41.3% |
| **Other** | 202 | 8.1% | 298 | 7.1% |
| **Total*** | 2,508 | 100.0% | 4,226 | 100.0% |

*Gender and ethnicity totals are not equal because some respondents did not answer one or the other on the survey.
*Source: 1998 TSSDAU*

## GENERAL USAGE TRENDS

### Elementary Survey

In Figures 2 and 3, reported tobacco usage in 1998 among elementary survey respondents shows very little change from previous years, with the exception of sixth graders. Sixth graders' reported lifetime usage rates have shown some decline for three consecutive years (from 33% to 25%). For all elementary students surveyed, tobacco usage levels are highest among sixth graders.

Figures 4 and 5 show that 1998 elementary students' reported alcohol usage (both recent and lifetime) is highest among sixth graders. Compared to previous years, little change was noted in reported recent elementary alcohol usage, although sixth-grade usage for the past two years (28% - 29%) was lower than in 1996 (34%). Reported lifetime alcohol usage remained at about the same levels for fourth and fifth graders as in past years, while a 10% decrease occurred from 1997 to 1998 among sixth graders, returning to 1995 lifetime usage levels.

Figure 2: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Recent (Past Year) Tobacco Use

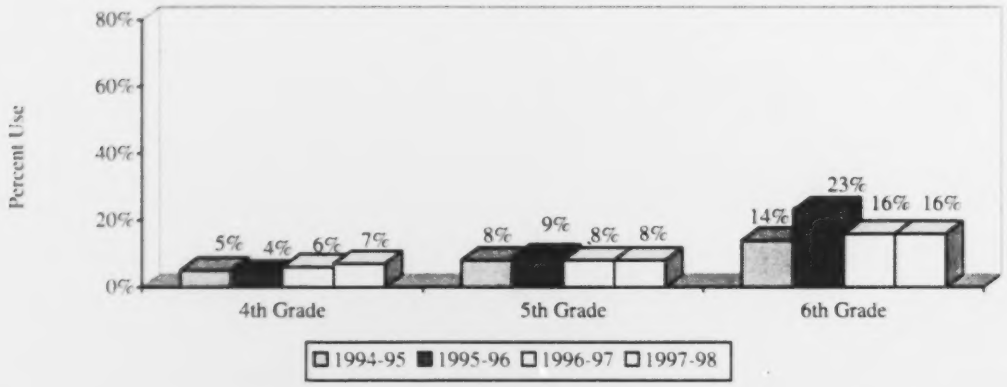



Figure 3: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Lifetime Tobacco Use

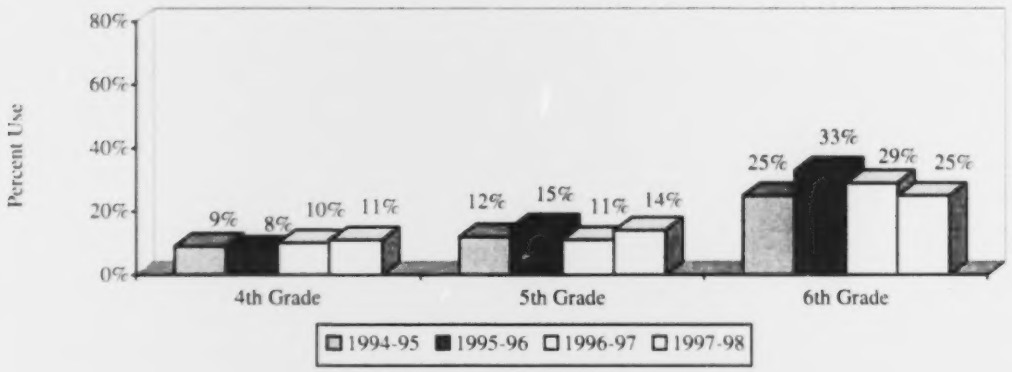
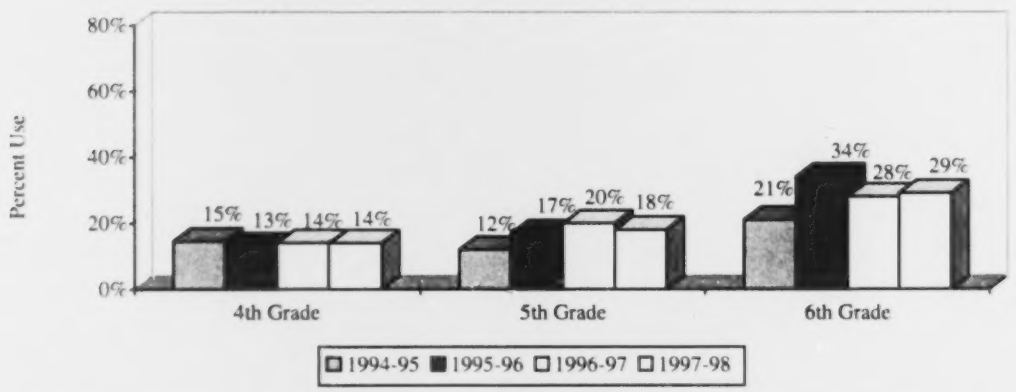
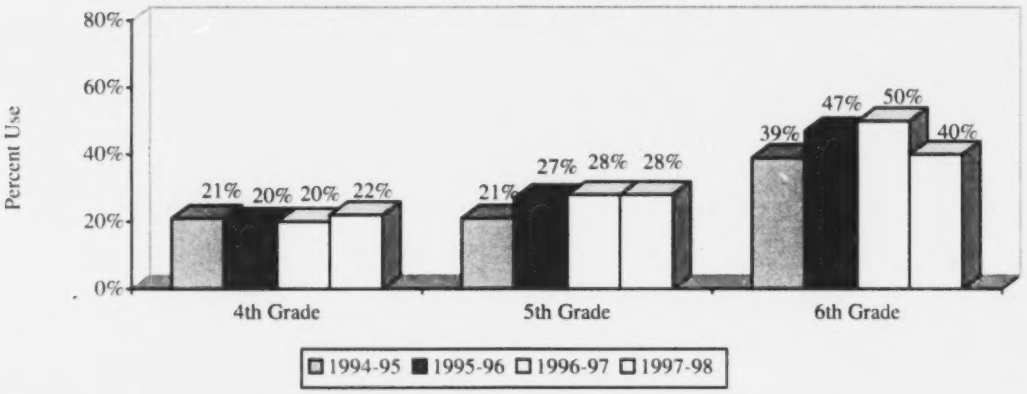



Figure 4: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Recent (Past Year) Alcohol Use




*Note that 6th graders' responses from both elementary and secondary campuses were included in these results. Also, for reported recent use, the 6th grade results for 1994-95 and 1996-97 represent past month usage.
*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 5: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Lifetime Alcohol Use

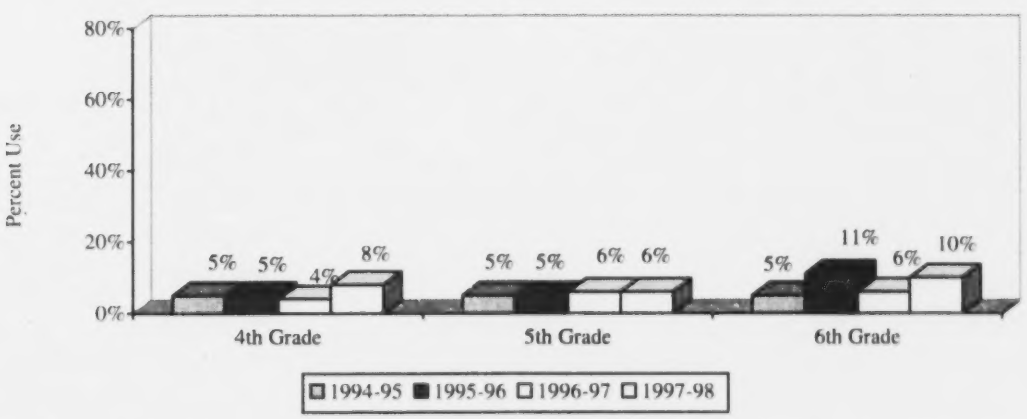



*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Although reported inhalant use among elementary students surveyed over the past four years has been low (between four and 14%) (see Figures 6 and 7), 1998 respondents in fourth and sixth grades showed increases of 4% in reported recent inhalant use compared to 1997. Among fourth graders, this represents a doubling of reported recent usage rates from 1997. Increases of two to three percent were noted in elementary students' lifetime inhalant usage rates as compared to 1997.

Reported recent and lifetime marijuana usage rates are very low for fourth and fifth graders, as seen in Figures 8 and 9, with little change seen over four years. Comparatively, reported recent and lifetime marijuana usage rates among sixth graders surveyed are higher (8% and 10%, respectively, in 1998). However, among sixth graders surveyed, a 6% decrease in reported lifetime usage was noted from 1997 (16%) to 1998 (10%), returning to 1995 usage levels.

Figure 6: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Recent (Past Year) Inhalant Use




*Note that 6th graders' responses from both elementary and secondary campuses were included in these results. Also, for reported recent use, the 6th grade results for 1994-95 and 1996-97 represent past month usage.
*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 7: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Lifetime Inhalant Use

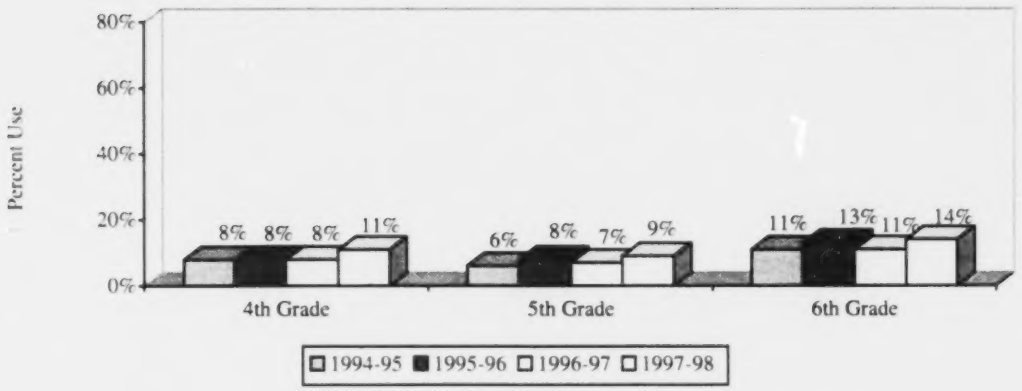



Figure 8: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Recent (Past Year) Marijuana Use

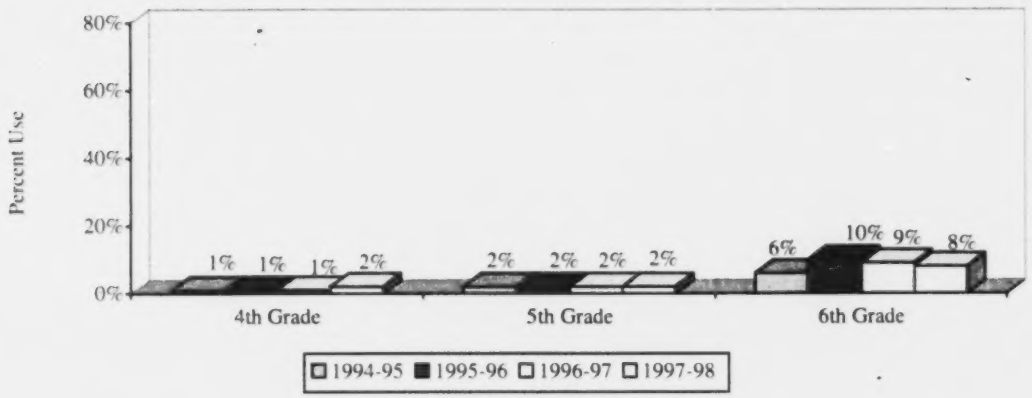
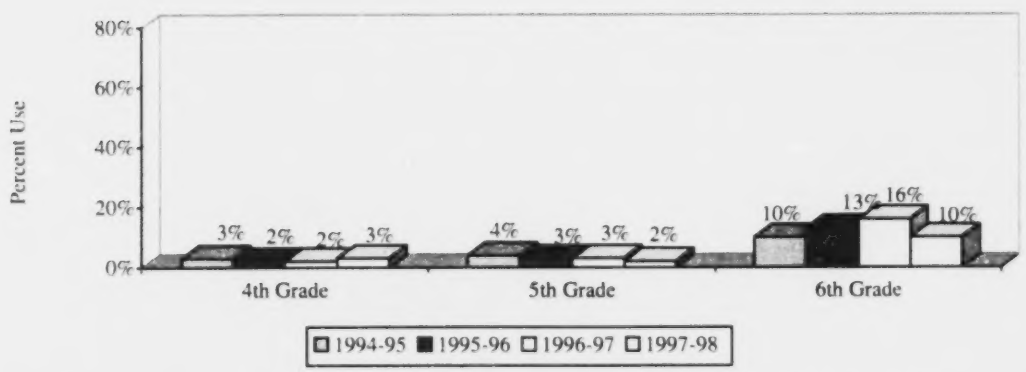



Figure 9: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Lifetime Marijuana Use




*Note that 6th graders' responses from both elementary and secondary campuses were included in these results. Also, for reported recent use, the 6th grade results for 1994-95 and 1996-97 represent past month usage.
*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

**Secondary Survey**

Figures 10 and 11 depict reported recent (past month) and lifetime tobacco use among secondary survey respondents in grades seven through twelve. In 1998, percent reported usage increased with grade level, reaching 34% recent usage and 65% lifetime usage among 12th graders. Compared with data from 1997, slight increases of one to five percentage points appeared in reported recent tobacco use among respondents in grades seven, ten, eleven, and twelve. Slight decreases (two to five percentage points) in reported recent tobacco use occurred among eighth and ninth graders. Increases were seen at all secondary grade levels from 1997 to 1998 in percentage of lifetime tobacco usage rates, with the biggest increase (13 percentage points) among 11th grade respondents.

Figures 12 and 13 show reported recent (past month) and lifetime alcohol usage rates for secondary student respondents. Compared to other substances reported, alcohol remained the most commonly used by AISD students. As with tobacco, the results for 1998 indicate that reported alcohol usage increased with grade level, reaching 56% recent usage and 87% lifetime usage among 12th graders. Compared with data from 1997, a slight increase to 51% was noted for 11th graders in reported recent alcohol use, while decreases were shown for respondents in grades seven through ten; there was no change for 12th grade respondents. Examining reported lifetime alcohol use, increases of two to six percentage points occurred at each secondary grade level except for ninth graders, where the level remained the same as in 1997 (78%).

Reported recent (past month) and lifetime inhalant usage rates at secondary grade levels are shown in Figures 14 and 15. Reported usage rates tend to drop off as grade levels increase, and the 1998 data seem to confirm this. Reported recent and lifetime usage rates were highest among seventh graders (14% and 29%, respectively) and lowest among 12th graders (four percent and 17%, respectively). Compared to 1997 data, there were increases of nine to 15 percentage points in reported recent and lifetime inhalant usage rates for respondents at all grade levels, the highest being among seventh and ninth graders responding.

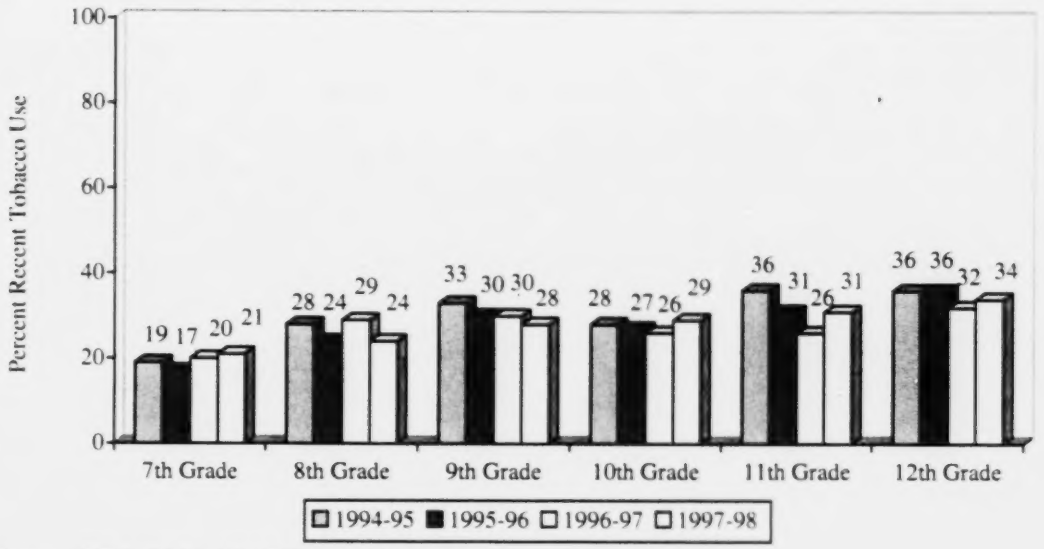
Figures 16 and 17 show reported recent (past month) and lifetime marijuana usage rates among secondary students surveyed. For reported recent use in 1998, the lowest rate was among seventh graders (14%) and the highest rate was among eleventh graders (27%). Also for reported recent use, there does not appear to be much change in percent usage rates from 1997, with the exception of ninth graders (decreasing by four percentage points to 26%) and tenth graders (increasing by four percentage points to 26%).

For reported lifetime marijuana use in 1998, the lowest rate was among seventh graders (30%) and the highest rate was among eleventh graders (59%). Ninth grade usage rates stayed at about the same level in 1998 (50%) as in 1997 (51%). However, there were increases in reported lifetime marijuana usage rates at all other grade levels, with the highest increases among tenth graders (up 14 percentage points to 56%) and eleventh graders (up 19 percentage points to 59%).

**Gateway Drugs**

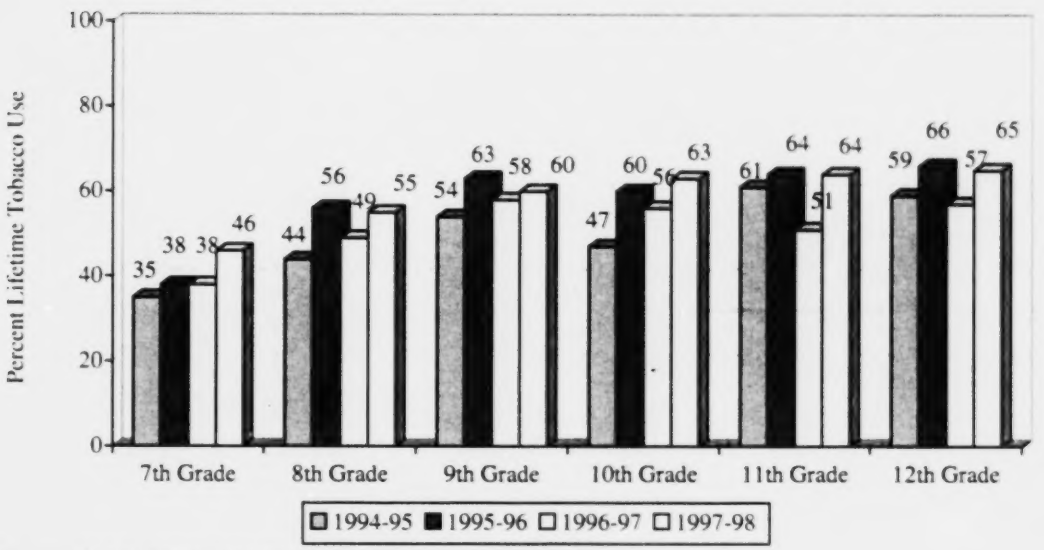
Some substances have been considered "gateway" drugs since they often are reported to precede use of other substances (Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 1995). The secondary school version of the TSSDAU had items asking students to report which substances they had tried first

Figure 10: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Tobacco Use



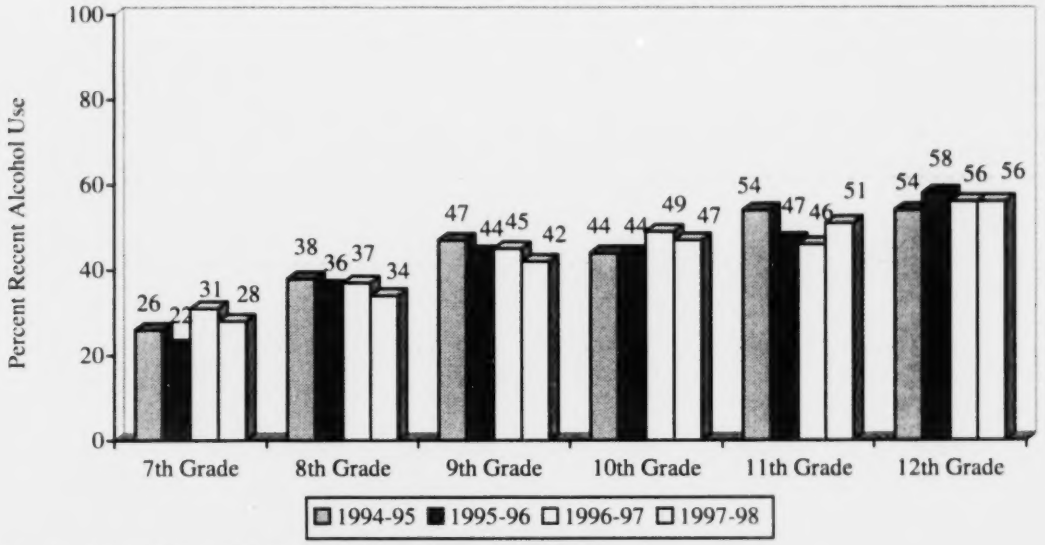

*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 11: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Lifetime Tobacco Use



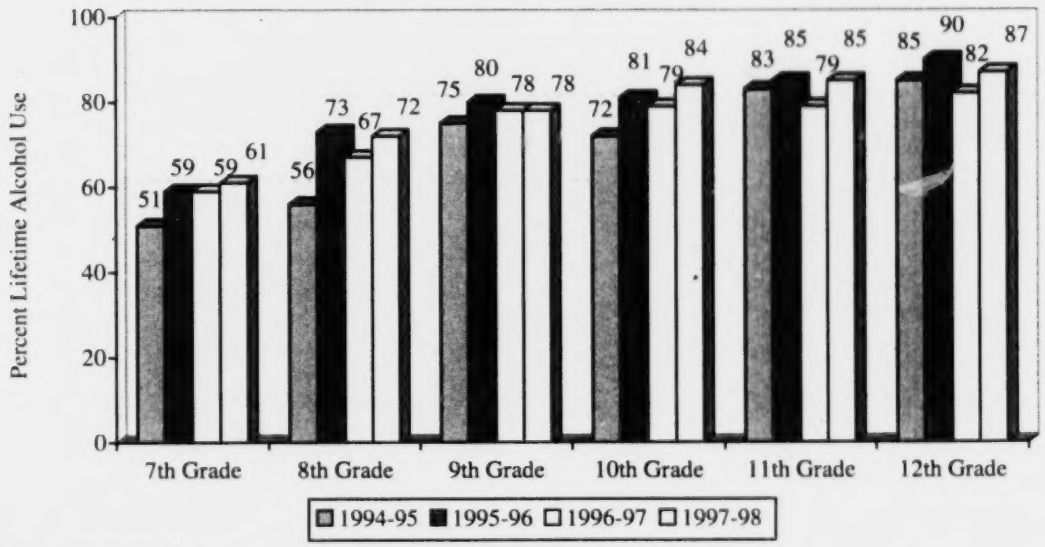

*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 12: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Alcohol Use



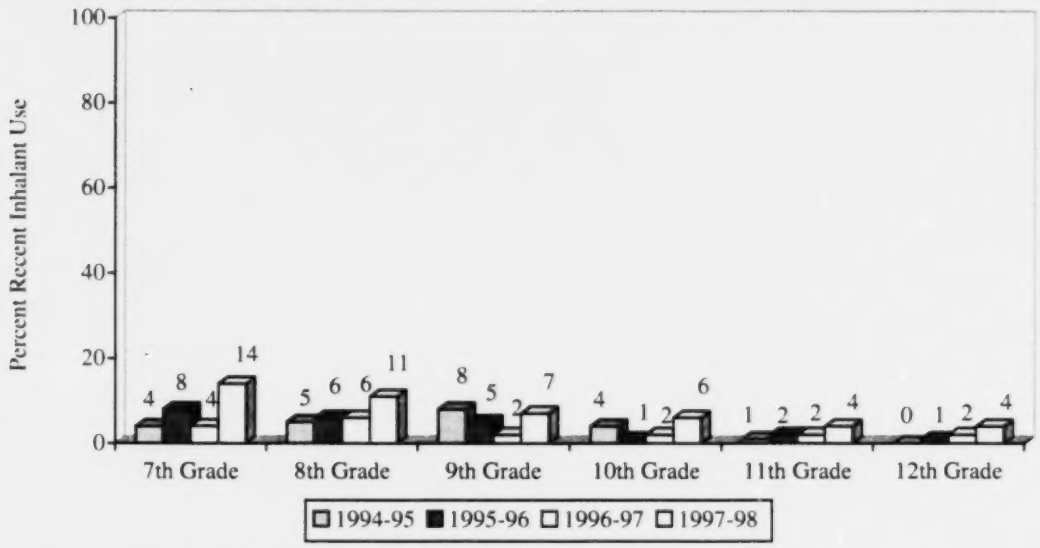

*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 13: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Lifetime Alcohol Use



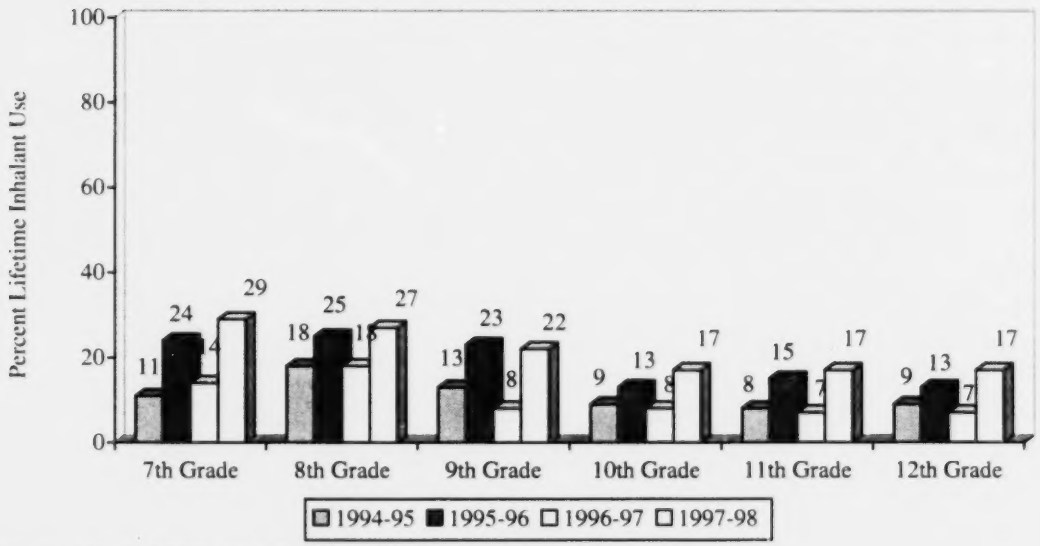

*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 14: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Inhalant Use



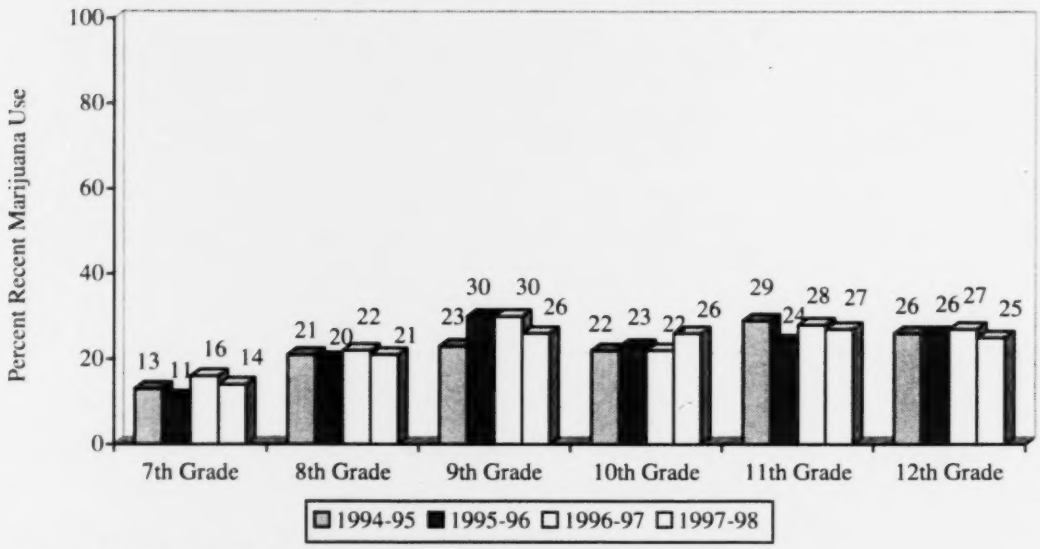

*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 15: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Lifetime Inhalant Use



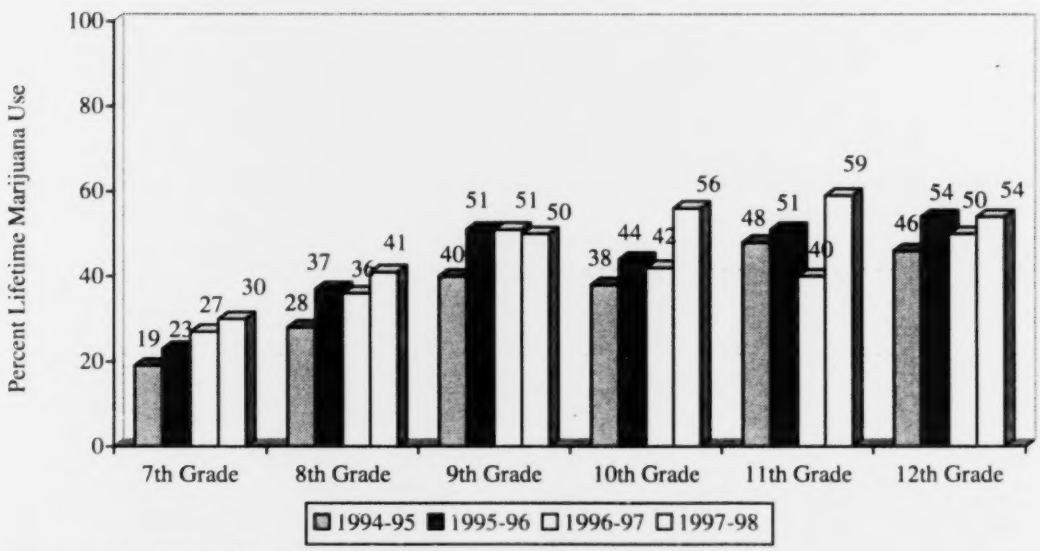

*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 16: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Marijuana Use




*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

Figure 17: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Lifetime Marijuana Use




*Source: 1995 SAODUS, 1996 TSSDAU, 1997 SSUSS, 1998 TSSDAU*

and at what ages they had tried these substances. The substances most students reported using first were cigarettes (25%) and beer (17%). The largest percentage of secondary student respondents reporting first use of either substance was at the age of 12 (cigarettes, 12%; beer 11%), with a range of responses from age nine to 18 years. Thus, cigarettes and beer were the most common substances used initially, but the precise order in which they were tried cannot be determined based upon the results of the survey since most students indicated age 12 for both substances.

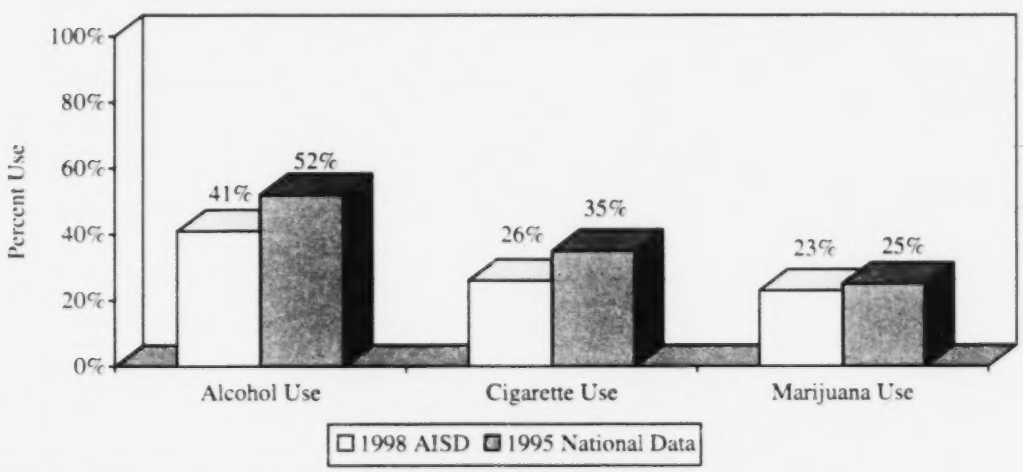
**Comparisons of AISD Survey Results with National Data**

In order to gauge the extent of substance use in AISD during the 1997-98 school year, as compared with that reported at the national level, the TSSDAU secondary student data were compared with national averages from the Centers for Disease Control's *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (YRBS) (CDC, 1996). The two surveys are similar in that they both assessed similar grade levels (YRBS, 9th – 12th grades; TSSDAU, 7th – 12th grades). Additionally, survey questions on both instruments were similar in format, allowing for more accurate comparisons of survey responses. One caveat, however, was that the TSSDAU had a wider grade span but smaller sample size, and the YRBS had a narrower grade span but larger sample size. Furthermore, the most recent YRBS data available were from 1995 as opposed to the TSSDAU's data from 1998. Therefore, comparisons discussed next should be interpreted with caution.

***Recent Usage Rate Comparisons***

Recent usage rates (past month) for 1998 AISD secondary school student respondents and 1995 YRBS national survey respondents are shown in Figure 18. Usage rates for alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes were lower than national rates by as much as 11%.

Figure 18: Percentage of Secondary Students' Recent Substance Use, AISD 1998 vs. National YRBS 1995

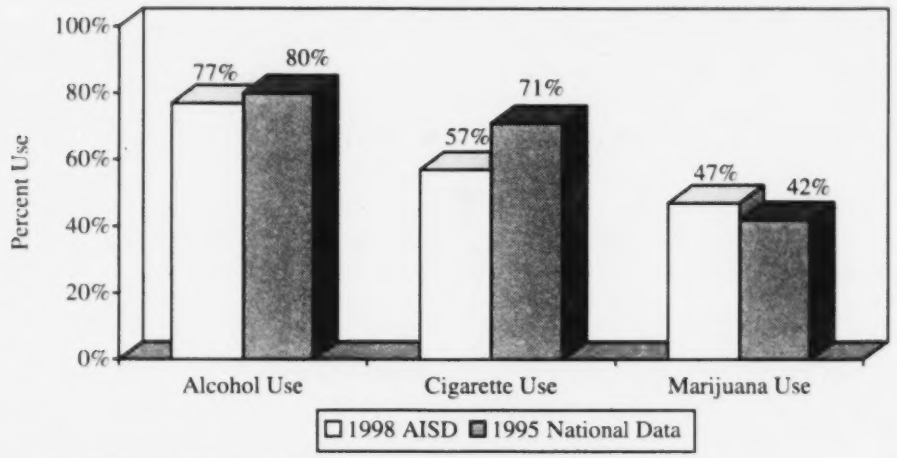



*Source: AISD TSSDAU, 1998, and Centers for Disease Control YRBS, 1995*

***Lifetime Usage Rate Comparisons***

Reported AISD secondary school student lifetime usage rates for 1998 and national lifetime usage rates from the 1995 YRBS are summarized in Figure 19. AISD secondary students' 1998 reported alcohol and cigarette lifetime usage rates were lower than the 1995 YRBS national survey results. AISD lifetime marijuana usage rates were slightly higher than national rates.

Figure 19: Percentage of Secondary Students' Lifetime Use, AISD 1998 vs. National YRBS 1995




*Source: AISD TSSDAU, 1998, and Centers for Disease Control YRBS, 1995*

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF SUBSTANCE USE

### Perceptions of Danger

Many student substance use surveys examine students' perceptions of the dangers of substance use in relation to actual use (e.g., Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 1995). Tables 2 and 3 summarize students' ratings of the dangers of using various substances including alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes, and inhalants. Overall, the majority of student respondents viewed these substances as dangerous or very dangerous. However, notable percentages of both elementary and secondary students viewed cigarette/tobacco use as not very or not at all dangerous (36% and 21%, respectively). Additionally, notable percentages of secondary students viewed alcohol (21%) and marijuana (31%) use as not very or not at all dangerous.

Table 2: Elementary Students' Perceptions of the Danger of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs

| Substance | Very Dangerous or Dangerous | Not at all Dangerous | Don't Know or Never Heard of |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cigarettes | 58% | 36% | 6% |
| Alcohol | 90% | 3% | 7% |
| Inhalants | 84% | 3% | 13% |
| Marijuana | 87% | 2% | 11% |

*Source: 1998 Elementary TSSDAU*

Table 3: Secondary Students' Perceptions of the Danger of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs

| Substance | Very or Somewhat Dangerous | Not Very or Not at all Dangerous | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Tobacco** | 72% | 21% | 6% |
| **Alcohol** | 75% | 21% | 4% |
| **Inhalants** | 89% | 5% | 6% |
| **Marijuana** | 65% | 31% | 4% |
| **Cocaine** | 92% | 3% | 6% |
| **Crack** | 93% | 2% | 5% |
| **Ecstacy** | 79% | 6% | 15% |
| **Heroin** | 92% | 2% | 7% |
| **Steroids** | 87% | 5% | 8% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

**Perception of Friends' Substance Use**

As shown in Tables 4 and 5, elementary and secondary school students were asked to report their perceptions of the extent to which their friends used various substances. Usually, the percentages of students reporting their perceptions of friends' use were lower at elementary than secondary grades. While only five percent of elementary students said that most of their friends used tobacco, 20% of secondary students reported that most of their friends used tobacco. Additionally, seven percent of elementary students reported that most of their friends used alcohol while 28% of secondary school students reported the same. Similar differences were noted with marijuana. However, since this survey involved cross-sectional methods of data collection, results do not necessarily indicate within-group increases across years.

Table 4: Elementary Students' Perception of Friends' Involvement in Substance Use

| Substance | Some | Most | Never Heard Of/ None |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Tobacco** | 25% | 5% | 70% |
| **Alcohol** | 27% | 7% | 66% |
| **Marijuana** | 11% | 4% | 56% |
| **Inhalants** | 11% | 3% | 87% |

*Source: 1998 Elementary TSSDAU*

Table 5: Secondary Students' Perception of Friends' Involvement in Substance Use

| Substance | A Few/ Some | Most | All | Never Heard Of/ None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Tobacco** | 53% | 20% | 4% | 24% |
| **Alcohol** | 41% | 28% | 13% | 17% |
| **Marijuana** | 36% | 21% | 11% | 31% |
| **Inhalants** | 17% | 2% | 0.6% | 82% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

### Perception of Parental Approval

Tables 6 and 7 show reported student perceptions of parents' attitudes about substance use. Elementary students were asked about their perceptions regarding parental approval of beer and marijuana use (see Table 6). The majority believed their parents did not approve of the use of either beer (80%) or marijuana (84%).

Secondary students were asked about their perceptions regarding parental approval of cigarette, beer, and marijuana use (see Table 7). As with elementary school students, the majority of secondary students believed their parents did not approve of the use of cigarettes (80%), beer (79%), or marijuana (83%).

Table 6: Elementary Students' Perception of Parental Approval of Substance Use

| Substance | Don't Like It | Don't Care | Think It's O.K. | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beer | 80% | 3% | 1% | 16% |
| Marijuana | 84% | 2% | 1% | 13% |

*Source: 1998 Elementary TSSDAU*

Table 7: Secondary Students' Perception of Parental Approval of Substance Use

| Substance | Disapprove | Neither | Approve | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cigarettes | 80% | 9% | 3% | 8% |
| Beer | 79% | 9% | 4% | 7% |
| Marijuana | 83% | 7% | 3% | 8% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

## Other Factors in Relation to Substance Use

Substance use has been examined in relation to other factors, including poor academic performance (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 1993), school conduct problems (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1994), drinking and driving (CDC, 1996), and increased school absences (Greenwood, 1992). Other research has shown that certain environmental/social or personal variables can act as buffers or protective factors that influence whether an individual will use drugs (e.g., Jessor, 1992; Turner, 1994; McCullough, Ashbridge, & Pegg, 1994). Finally, most survey research investigates where students get information about drugs, and whom they would go to for help. Survey data relating to some of these areas are summarized in this section.

### Academic Performance

Among secondary student respondents, reported illicit substance use was compared with students' reported typical academic grades. Higher academic performance seemed to be more common among students who had never used drugs. For instance, among students who reported usually getting A's and B's, a higher percentage of students had *never* used drugs (56.7%) than among those who reported usually getting C's, D's or F's (34.2%).

**Problem Behaviors**

Among the survey data, several findings stand out. For example, 77% of all secondary students reported that they had ever used any type of alcohol, 41% had used alcohol at least once in the past month, and 18% reported they often drank five or more drinks at one time (several times per month). These numbers are important to consider, as alcohol use has been associated with numerous other problem behaviors. For example, national statistics show that nearly one-third (30%) of all motor vehicle fatalities within this age group are alcohol-related (NHTSA, 1996). When surveyed, 10% of all secondary school student respondents and 19% of 12th graders reported having driven a car one to three times in the past year after they had had a "good bit to drink". Furthermore, those who reported they had used alcohol also had higher average rates of reported school absences due to illnesses (4.6 days) than those who did not use alcohol (3.6 days). Those who reported they had used alcohol also had higher average rates of reported school conduct problems (3.7 days) than those who did not use alcohol (1.5 days).

Rates of marijuana use also were examined in relation to selected problem behaviors. Forty-seven percent of secondary school students reported having ever used marijuana, 23% had used it in the previous 30 days, and 7% reported they often used marijuana several times per week. Marijuana users reported higher average rates of school absences due to illness (4.7 days) than did non-users (3.9 days). Users also reported higher average rates of conduct problems (4.8 days) than did non-users (1.7 days). Finally, approximately 9% of all secondary school students and 13% of 12th graders reported having driven a car one to three times in the past year while high.

**Personal and Family Risk and Resiliency Factors**

Certain risk and resiliency factors have been examined in relation to substance use. They include, but are not limited to, familial substance use (Turner, 1994), involvement in extracurricular activities (Jessor, 1992), and setting goals for the future (McCullough, Ashbridge, & Pegg, 1994). For example, one study found that witnessing a family member use a substance was associated with an increase in the likelihood that a child will use substances by creating acceptable usage norms within the family (Tinsley, 1995). The secondary school version of the TSSDAU included items pertaining to these factors. As shown in Table 8, students reported that the most common substance they saw a family member use was alcohol (35%); 30% of respondents had *not* seen family members use any of the substances listed.

Table 8: Secondary Student Respondents' - Family Member Use of Substances

| Substances | Percent |
|---|---|
| **Alcohol** | 35% |
| **Cigarettes** | 24% |
| **Marijuana** | 5% |
| **Other (includes Heroin and Hallucinogens)** | 4% |
| **Cocaine or Crack** | 2% |
| **Did not see them use any of these substances** | 30% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

Involvement in extra-curricular activities has been associated with lower substance use (Jessor, 1992). As shown in Table 9, the most common extra-curricular activity in which

secondary students reported their participation was going to the movies, mall, or a park (25%); 10% had a job; nine percent were in a church/synagogue youth group; eight percent were members of a sports league; 19% did not participate in any of the activities listed. Having positive goals for the future (e.g., going to college) has been correlated with lower drug usage rates in this age group due to attachment to conventional goals and development of a sense of purpose (Jessor, 1977, 1992; Serna & Smith, 1995). As shown in Table 10, the majority of respondents (62%) planned to attend a four-year university after high school. However, 12% reported that they did not have any plans or did not know yet what they would do after high school. Three percent did not expect to finish high school at all.

Table 9: Activities in Which Secondary Students Participate

| | |
|---|---|
| **Movies, mall, park** | 25% |
| **Other activities/response** | 20% |
| **Job** | 10% |
| **Church/synagogue youth group** | 9% |
| **Youth sports league** | 8% |
| **Scouts, 4-H, other service group** | 6% |
| **Community volunteer** | 3% |
| **None of the above** | 19% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

Table 10: Secondary Students' Plans After High School

| | |
|---|---|
| **Attend a four-year university** | 62% |
| **Get a job** | 9% |
| **Attend a technical/2-year college** | 8% |
| **Enter the military** | 4% |
| **Other Response** | 3% |
| **No plans or do not know yet** | 12% |
| **Will not finish high school** | 3% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

**Sources of Information**

Students were asked to report whether they had received information about the problems associated with drugs or alcohol from a variety of sources. Tables 11 and 12 list student responses by information source on drugs and/or alcohol. Note that students were able to list more than one source. Both elementary and secondary school students most often reported receiving information from any school source (89% and 57%, respectively). The second most

common source for elementary students was their teacher (66%). The second most common source of information for secondary students was health class (42%).

Table 11: Elementary Student Respondents - Sources of Drug/Alcohol Information

| Information Source | Percent Receiving Information |
|---|---|
| **Any school source** | 89% |
| **Your teacher** | 66% |
| **Visitor to class** | 63% |
| **Guidance counselor** | 55% |
| **School assembly program** | 54% |
| **Someone else at school** | 41% |

*Source: 1998 Elementary TSSDAU*

Table 12: Secondary Student Respondents - Sources of Drug/Alcohol Information

| Information Source | Percent Receiving Information |
|---|---|
| **Any school source** | 57% |
| **Health class** | 42% |
| **School assembly program** | 32% |
| **Science class** | 32% |
| **Some other school source** | 30% |
| **An invited school guest** | 27% |
| **Guidance counselor** | 16% |
| **Student group session** | 13% |
| **Social studies class** | 12% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

**Sources of Help**

Secondary student respondents were asked to report to whom they would go if they had a problem with drugs or alcohol and needed help (see Table 13). [This item was not included on the elementary school survey.] Note that students could choose more than one source of help. Secondary student respondents reported they were most likely to ask a friend for help if they had a problem with drugs or alcohol (78%). The second most common source of help cited was another adult, such as a clergyman or other family friend (58%) and parents were the third most commonly cited source (55%).

Table 13: Secondary School Students' Reported Sources of Help for Drug/Alcohol Problem

| Source of Help | Percent Responding |
|---|---|
| **Your friends** | 78% |
| **Another adult (e.g., relative, clergy, friend)** | 58% |
| **Your parents** | 55% |
| **A counselor or program outside of school** | 41% |
| **A medical doctor** | 39% |
| **A counselor or program at school** | 29% |
| **Another adult in school (nurse, teacher)** | 28% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

## SCHOOL SAFETY

Secondary school students were asked questions concerning safety issues within their school. Overall, 82% of respondents said they either felt very safe or somewhat safe at school, an increase from 74% of respondents in the 1997 student survey. Issues impacting students' perception of safety at school also were addressed, including fear of harm, harming others, and weapon carrying, as shown in Tables 14 and 15. The majority of respondents reported that they had never changed their behavior due to fear of harm (69%), had never *been* physically harmed or threatened (55%), and had never physically harmed or threatened *another* (67%). However, a notable percentage did report having been physically harmed a couple of times in the previous year (20%). Regarding weapons at school, most secondary student respondents (75%, n=2562) had never brought a weapon to school. However, among secondary student respondents, 10% (n= 347) had brought knives to school and 3% (n= 99) had brought guns to school. These figures are close to those reported in the 1997 survey (knives, 9%, and guns, 1%). In addition, these results are similar to those in the 1995 YRBS (CDC, 1996), with 10% of a national sample of respondents indicating they had brought a weapon to school during the previous year. However, all of these data should be viewed with caution as the surveys are based on self-report.

Table 14: Reported Fear of Harm, Physical Harm or Threat of Harm

| Response | Fear of Harm Impacted Behavior? | Have Been Physically Harmed/Threatened? | Have Physically Harmed or Threatened Another? |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Never** | 69% | 55% | 67% |
| **Only one time** | 10% | 16% | 13% |
| **A couple of times this year** | 13% | 20% | 11% |
| **Once a month** | 2% | 3% | 2% |
| **Once a week** | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| **Other response** | 4% | 4% | 4% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

Table 15: Reported Weapon Carrying

| Weapon | Which Weapons Have You Brought to School? |
|---|---|
| **Knife** | 10% |
| **Gun or stun gun** | 3% |
| **Stick, club, blackjack, nunchucks** | 1% |
| **Brass knuckles** | 1% |
| **Mace or pepper spray** | 2% |
| **Other weapon** | 2% |
| **Never brought a weapon to school** | 75% |
| **Other response** | 5% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

## AISD SDFSC PROGRAMS

Secondary students reported SDFSC programs and activities in which they had been involved over the past two years. Students also reported the programs in which they had participated that had impacted their conflict resolution skills and their decisions to use or not use

drugs or alcohol. Results are summarized in Tables 16 and 17. Note that due to the following caveats, data must be interpreted with caution: the data are self-reported and, due to inconsistent survey administration of the supplemental survey section, there is a large portion of missing data.

As shown in Table 16, the most common program/activity related to drug-alcohol education in which students reported participating was classroom instruction. However, these percentages were notably low (11% in 1996-97, and 15% in 1997-98) considering the district's intention to address these issues from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Additionally, 63% (1996-97) and 65% (1997-98) reported not having participated in any of the activities listed.

Table 16: Percent Involved in SDFSC Programs/Activities

| Activity/Program | 1996-97 | 1997-98 |
|---|---|---|
| Lessons in classes | 11% | 15% |
| Other program or activity | 10% | 6% |
| Special school event | 6% | 6% |
| ROPES program | 4% | 3% |
| PAL program | 3% | 3% |
| Positive Families program | 0.8% | 0.9% |
| SUPER I program | 0.7% | 0.6% |
| Student Assistance Program (SAP) | 0.6% | 0.4% |
| None of the above | 63% | 65% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

Table 17 shows that the program most student respondents said impacted their conflict resolution skills and their decisions to use drugs or alcohol was "other program or activity", followed by DARE, then a special school event, and lessons in class. Thus, many students report that these various SDFSC programs and activities are making a difference in their lives when it comes to drug use decisions and conflict resolution skills.

Table 17: Programs Which Impacted Student's Drug Use and Conflict Resolution

| Activity/Program | Impacted Decisions About Drug/Alcohol Use | Impacted Conflict Resolution |
|---|---|---|
| Other program or activity | 55% | 71% |
| DARE program | 27% | 13% |
| Special school event | 5% | 6% |
| Lessons in classes | 5% | 3% |
| PAL program | 2% | 3% |
| ROPES program | 2% | 1% |
| Positive Families program | 1% | 1% |
| Student Assistance Program (SAP) | 0.8% | 0.8% |
| SUPER I program | 0.7% | 0.4% |

*Source: 1998 Secondary TSSDAU*

## SUMMARY

The most commonly used substance continues to be alcohol (e.g., 29% of sixth graders used alcohol in the past year; 56% of 12th graders had used alcohol in the past month). Tobacco is the second most commonly used substance (e.g., 16% of sixth graders had used tobacco in the past year; 34% of 12th graders had used tobacco in the past month).

Generally, students' reported substance usage rates tended to increase with age/grade level. Elementary (fourth through sixth grades) student levels of substance use remained about the same, compared with the previous year, with the exception of a decrease in lifetime alcohol use at the sixth grade level. For secondary students, recent usage rates for tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana remained about the same as in the 1997 student survey. However, increases were seen in recent usage rates for inhalants, especially at the seventh and eighth grade levels. Lifetime usage rates for alcohol in secondary students also remained about the same as in the 1997 survey results. More notable increases were seen in reported lifetime usage rates of inhalants, tobacco, and marijuana at certain grade levels, especially 10th and 11th grades.

Most students surveyed recognized the dangers of using certain substances. However, 36% of elementary student respondents and 21% of secondary student respondents did not think cigarettes/tobacco were dangerous. Regarding perceptions of alcohol, 3.1% of elementary respondents did not think alcohol was dangerous, and another 5.4% did not know. For secondary student respondents, 21% perceived that alcohol was not very or not at all dangerous. Regarding perceptions of inhalants, 3.1% of elementary students perceived them as not at all dangerous, while 8.7% did not know. Among secondary students, 4.7% indicated that inhalants were not very or not at all dangerous. For marijuana, 2.1% of elementary student respondents indicated that marijuana was not at all dangerous while 5.9% did not know. Almost one-third of secondary student respondents (31%) indicated that marijuana was either not very dangerous or not at all dangerous.

The percentage of those who believed their friends use certain substances was higher among secondary school students. That is, only five percent of elementary student respondents believed that most of their friends used tobacco and seven percent believed they used alcohol. However, among secondary student respondents, 20% believed most of their friends used tobacco and 28% believed most used alcohol. Finally, most survey respondents (79% - 83%) reported that their parents did not approve of the use of cigarettes, beer, or marijuana.

Problem behaviors associated with alcohol and drug use also were assessed among secondary students. Some secondary students (18%) reported heavy use of alcohol (five or more drinks several times per month). Students who reported that they used alcohol and/or marijuana had higher reported rates of school conduct problems and class absences than did non-users. Additionally, 10% of all secondary students reported having driven a car one to three times in the last year after having a "good bit to drink", and nine percent reported driving while high.

Secondary students also responded to items addressing risk and resiliency factors. While 35% had seen a family member use alcohol and 24% had seen a family member use cigarettes, nearly one-third (30%) had not seen a family member use any of the substances listed. When extra-curricular activities were examined, many students reported participation in social activities after school such as going to the movies, mall, or park (25%), and 10% percent had a job. However, 19% did not participate in any of the extra-curricular activities listed on the survey. Other factors such as future plans were examined; 62% had plans to attend a four-year university after graduating high school. Yet, 12% said they did not have any post-high school graduation plans.

When asked where they received information on the dangers of drugs and alcohol, secondary survey respondents reported a variety of school and non-school sources. Most

secondary school students indicated that if they had a problem with drugs/alcohol, they would seek help from their friends (78%), another adult other than parent (58%), or their parents (55%). About two-thirds of secondary survey respondents indicated that they had *not* participated in a SDFSC program or activity in the past two years. Although this figure is quite high, caution is necessary in interpreting these results for several reasons: students may not have recognized or remembered all events at their campuses that may have been SDFSC-related; and, due to distribution problems with supplemental survey questions, not all students may have received these questions. Nevertheless, the issue of access to SDFSC activities and prevention/education needs to be addressed in AISD.

Perceptions and indicators of school safety were other components of this year's secondary school survey. Most of the secondary students surveyed reported feeling safe at school (82%). However, other results may reflect some safety issues and problems occurring in the schools. For instance, 13% of secondary student respondents indicated that several times in the past year they had done something they would not normally do for fear of being harmed. Furthermore, 20% said they had been physically harmed or threatened *by someone else*, and 11% said *they* had physically harmed or threatened *another person* a couple of times in the past year. Finally, 10% indicated that they had brought a knife and three percent had brought a gun to school during the past school year. However, 75% of respondents reported never having brought a weapon to school, indicating that the majority of students are reporting to be weapon-free.

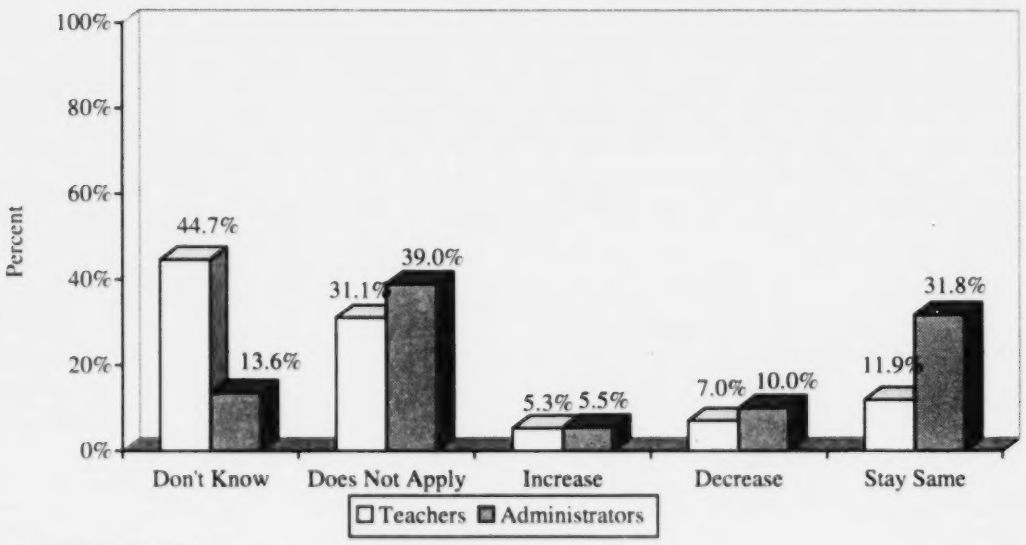
## COORDINATED SURVEY OF AISD EMPLOYEES

In the spring of 1998, a random stratified sample of 360 AISD staff (teachers and campus administrators) completed a survey, distributed by the AISD Office of Program Evaluation. The purpose of this survey was to obtain staff opinions and perceptions about alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in the district, student and staff safety, and AISD prevention/education efforts. Of this number, 355 surveys were validated and used for analysis, a 98.6% response rate. The respondent sample, 244 teachers and 111 campus administrators (principals and assistant principals), represent 6% of AISD teaching staff and 49% of AISD campus administrative staff.

### THE PRESENCE OF ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS ON CAMPUS

When asked whether the presence of alcohol was increasing, decreasing or staying the same on their campuses, 354 staff responded. As shown in Figure 20, among staff respondents, 44.7% (n=109) of teachers and 13.6% (n=15) of administrators answered "don't know". An additional 31.1% (n=76) of teachers and 39.1% (n=43) of administrators answered "does not apply". Only 5.3% (n=13) teachers and 5.5% (n=6) administrators perceived an increase in the presence of alcohol on campus. An additional 7% (n=17) of teachers and 10% (n=11) of administrators perceived a decrease in the presence of alcohol on campus. Finally, 11.9% (n=29) of teachers and 31.8% (n=35) of administrators perceived no change in the presence of alcohol on campus. Some caution should be taken in interpreting these results. For instance, those staff who chose "does not apply" may be acknowledging that alcohol is not present on their campus. Also the answer choice "stay the same" does not give any indication of the level of alcohol presence (high or low); it only indicates that the level has stayed the same.

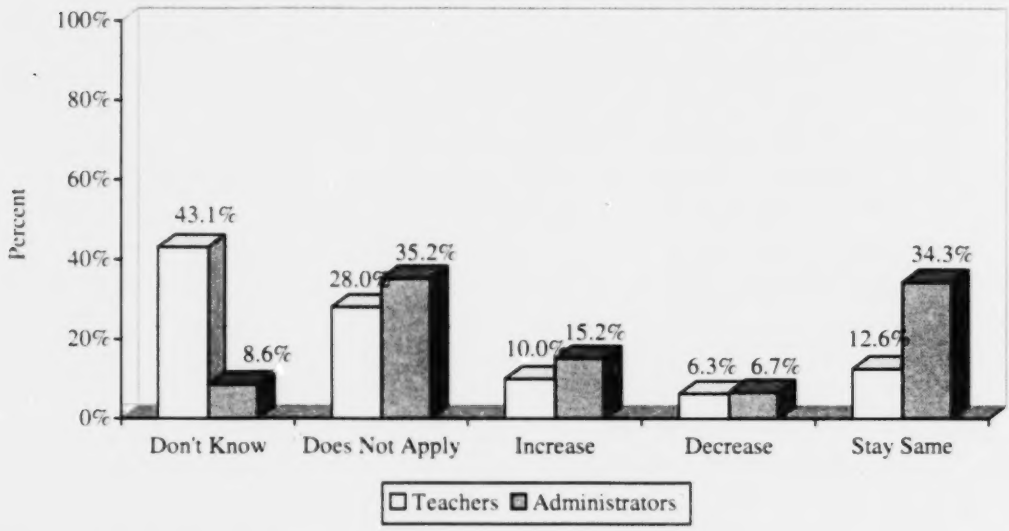
Figure 20: Staff Opinion of the Presence of Alcohol on Campus, 1997-98




*Source: 1998 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey*

When asked about the presence of illegal drugs on their campuses, 344 staff responded. As shown in Figure 21, among staff respondents, 43.1% (n=103) of teachers and 8.6% (n=9) of administrators selected "don't know". An additional 28% (n=67) of teachers and 35.2% (n=32) of administrators answered "does not apply". Approximately 10% (n=24) of teachers and 15.2% (n=16) of administrators perceived an increase in the presence of illegal drugs on campus. Another 6.3% (n=15) of teachers and 6.7% (n=7) of administrators perceived a decrease in the presence of illegal drugs on campus. Finally, 12.6% (n=30) of teachers and 34.3% (n=36) of administrators perceived no change in the presence of illegal drugs on campus.

Figure 21: Staff Opinion of the Presence of Illegal Drugs on Campus, 1997-98



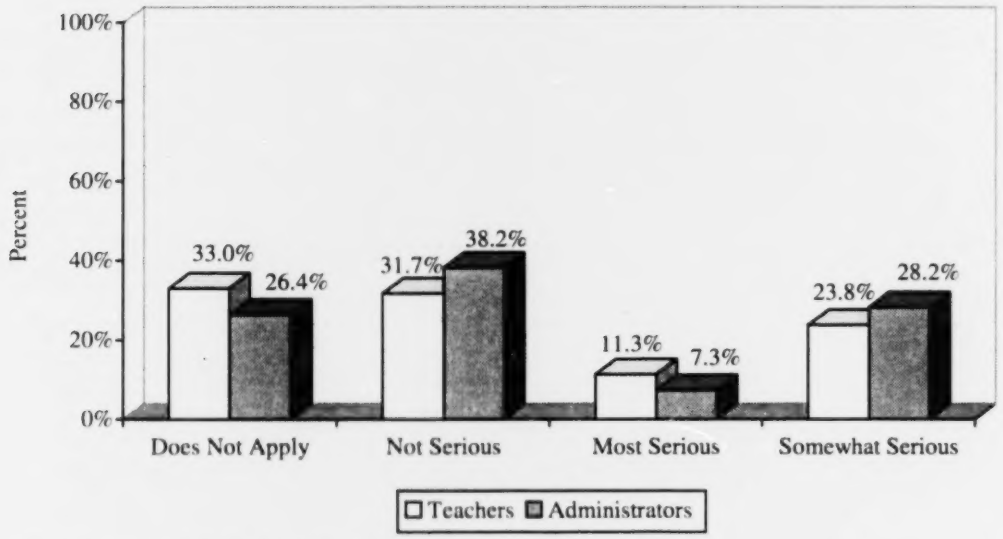

*Source: 1998 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey*

**THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM ON CAMPUS**

Staff also rated the seriousness of the problem of substance abuse among students and staff at their campuses. As shown in Figure 22, of the 352 respondents, 33.3% (n=80) of teachers and 26.4% (n=29) of administrators selected "does not apply", implying that student alcohol use was not a problem on their campuses. Similarly, 31.7% (n=76) of teachers and 38.2% (n=42) of administrators responded that student alcohol use was not a serious problem at all on campus. Student alcohol use was rated the most serious problem by 11.3% (n=27) of teachers and 7.3% (n=8) of administrators. The remaining 23.8% (n=57) of teachers and 28.2% (n=31) of administrators said student alcohol use was a moderately or somewhat serious problem.

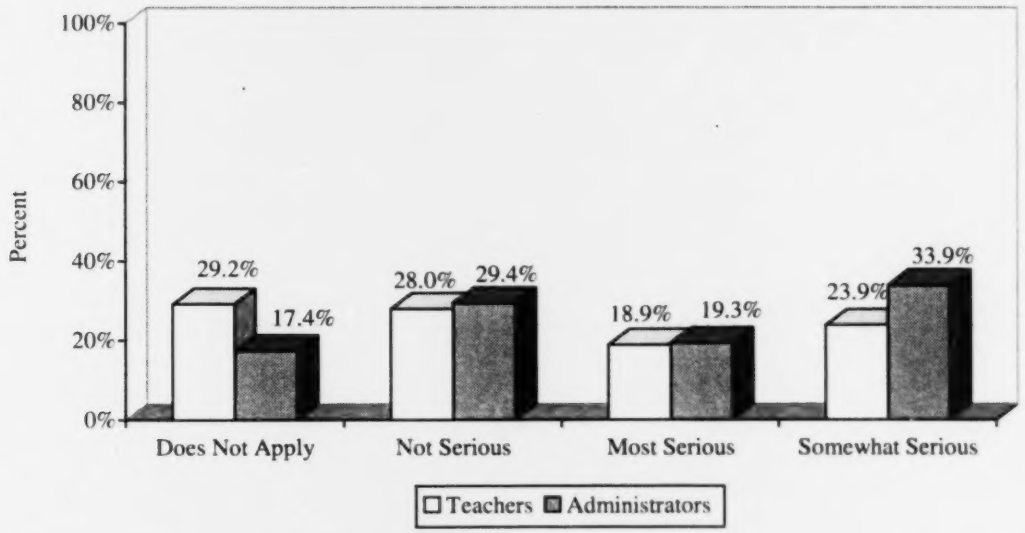
When asked about the seriousness of student illegal drug use on their campuses, 354 staff responded. As shown in Figure 23, 29.2% (n=71) of teachers and 17.4% (n=19) of administrators selected "does not apply", implying that student illegal drug use was not a problem on campus. Similarly, 28% (n=68) of teachers and 29.4% (n=32) of administrators responded that student illegal drug use was not a serious problem at all on campus. Student illegal drug use was rated the most serious problem on campus by18.9% (n=46) of teachers and

Figure 22: Staff Opinion on the Seriousness of Student Alcohol Use on Campus, 1997-98




*Source: 1998 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey*

Figure 23: Staff Opinion on the Seriousness of Student Illegal Drug Use on Campus, 1997-98



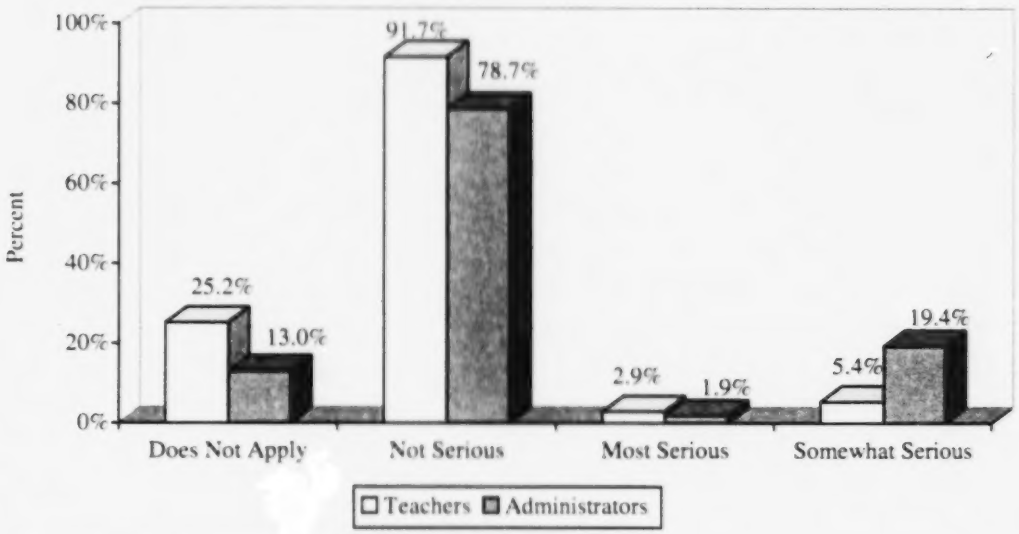

*Source: 1998 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey*

37

19.3% (n=21) of administrators. A moderately or somewhat serious rating was given by 23.9% (n=58) of teachers and 33.9% (n=37) of administrators.

Finally, Figure 24 summarizes how 352 staff responded to the seriousness of staff substance use (alcohol or drugs) on their campuses. Of these, 25.2% (n=61) of teachers and 13% (n=14) of administrators selected "does not apply", implying that staff substance use is not a problem at their campuses. Similarly, the majority of teachers (91.7%, n=222) and administrators (78.7%, n=85) indicated that staff substance use was not a serious problem at all. Very few staff indicated that staff substance use was the most serious problem (2.9% or 7 teachers; 1.9% or 2 administrators), or was a moderately or somewhat serious problem (5.4% or 13 teachers; 19.4% or 21 administrators).

Figure 24: Staff Opinion on the Seriousness of Staff Substance Abuse on Campus, 1997-98




*Source: 1998 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey*

### STAFF OPINIONS ON AISD DRUG PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Staff members were asked to report their familiarity with the following AISD SDFSC programs and prevention/education efforts: campus-based programs, prevention curriculum materials (E.S.R. II, Healthy Choices, Texas Prevention Curriculum Guide - D.A.V.E), DARE, PAL, ROPES, SAP, SUPER I and Positive Families (see the Programs section of this report for a detailed description of each of these programs). As shown in Table 18, staff respondents were most familiar with the DARE and PAL student programs and with the district's prevention curriculum materials. To a lesser degree, staff respondents were familiar with ROPES, SAP, and campus-based programs. Staff respondents were least familiar with SUPER I and Positive Families, but this may be attributed to several reasons, including that both are new programs, and both are options for student removals used by secondary school administrators only.

Staff respondents rated the effectiveness of AISD's student substance use prevention programs in deterring student substance use. From 355 respondents, 37.6% (n=91) of teachers and 21.6% (n=24) of administrators selected "not sure". A "very effective" or "effective" rating

Table 18: Staff Familiarity With AISD SDFSC Programs, 1997-98

| AISD SDFSC Programs | % Teacher Familiarity | % Administrator Familiarity |
|---|---|---|
| DARE | 30.6% | 17.9% |
| PAL | 20.6% | 16.4% |
| K-12 Prevention Curricula (E.S.R. II, Healthy Choices, Texas Prevention Curriculum Guide – D.A.V.E.) | 17.6% | 14.4% |
| ROPES | 11.6% | 12.2% |
| SAP | 7.5% | 13.9% |
| Campus Programs | 9.5% | 10% |
| SUPER I | 0.9% | 8.4% |
| Positive Families | 1.7% | 7.0% |

*Source: 1998 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey*

was given to AISD's student substance use prevention programs by 16.1% (n=39) of teachers and by 13.5% (n=15) of administrators. A "moderately effective" or "somewhat effective" rating was given by 37.6% (n=91) of teachers and 58.6% (n=65) of administrators. Only 8.7% (n=21) of teachers and 6.3% (n=7) of administrators rated the programs "not effective at all".

### Staff Training

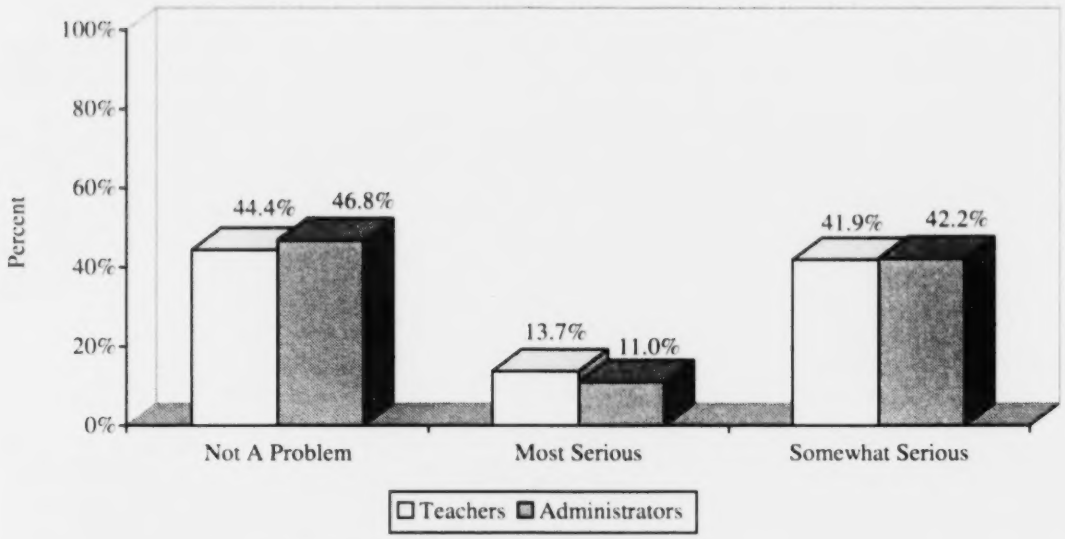
Staff respondents reported the number of workshops, seminars and/or conferences they had attended during 1997-98 that focused on the prevention of student substance use. Of the 351 staff respondents, most teachers (82.8%, n=198) and a little more than half of administrators (56.4%, n=62) indicated they had not attended any training during the 1997-98 school year. At least 16.7% (n=40) of teachers and 41.8% (n=46) of administrators had attended one or two prevention training sessions during the school year. However, only three respondents (one teacher, and two administrators) had attended three or more prevention training opportunities.

### Safety

Staff respondents were asked for their opinions on campus safety in two ways. First, staff rated the seriousness of the problem of student and staff safety on their campus. Second, staff respondents were asked to report whether or not they had been threatened or harmed by a student during the school year.

When asked to rate the *seriousness* of the problem of student/staff safety, 352 responded. As shown in Figure 25, of these respondents, many indicated that student/staff safety was not a problem on their campus (44.4% or 107 teachers; 46.8% or 51 of administrators). A "most serious" or "very serious" rating was given by 13.7% (n=33) of teachers and 11% (n=12) of administrators. A "moderately serious" or "somewhat serious" rating was given by 41.9% (n=101) of teachers and 42.2% (n=46) of administrators.

Figure 25: Staff Opinion of the Seriousness of Student/Staff Safety, 1997-98




*Source: 1998 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey*

When asked about *being threatened or harmed* by a student during 1997-98, 348 staff members responded, most of whom said they had never been threatened or harmed (84.9% or 203 teachers; 77.1% or 84 administrators). One incident of being threatened or harmed by a student was reported by 9.6% (n=23) of teachers and 11% (n=12) of administrators. Approximately 2.9% (n=7) of teachers and 7.3% (n=8) of administrators reported having been threatened or harmed by a student twice during the school year. Three to five incidents of being threatened or harmed by a student was reported by only 1.7% (n=4) of teachers and 3.7% (n=4) of administrators. Finally, three staff respondents (two teachers, and one administrator) reported having been threatened or harmed by a student more than five times during 1997-98.

**SUMMARY**

Generally, staff respondents did not perceive that there was much of a substance use problem on their campuses. However, staff respondents seemed to consider student-staff safety to be more of a problem on campus. A majority of teachers (65.6%) and administrators (53.2%) who responded indicated that campus safety was either a somewhat serious or the most serious problem they faced at their campuses. Furthermore, 15.1% of teacher respondents and 22.9% of administrator respondents reported having been threatened or harmed one or more times during 1997-98. Of AISD's SDFSC programs and educational materials, staff respondents were most familiar with DARE, PAL, and the district's prevention materials. In addition, most staff respondents seemed to think that these prevention efforts had some effect in deterring student substance use. However, many teachers or administrators reported that they had not received any training in prevention of substance abuse.

## District Student Incidence Data

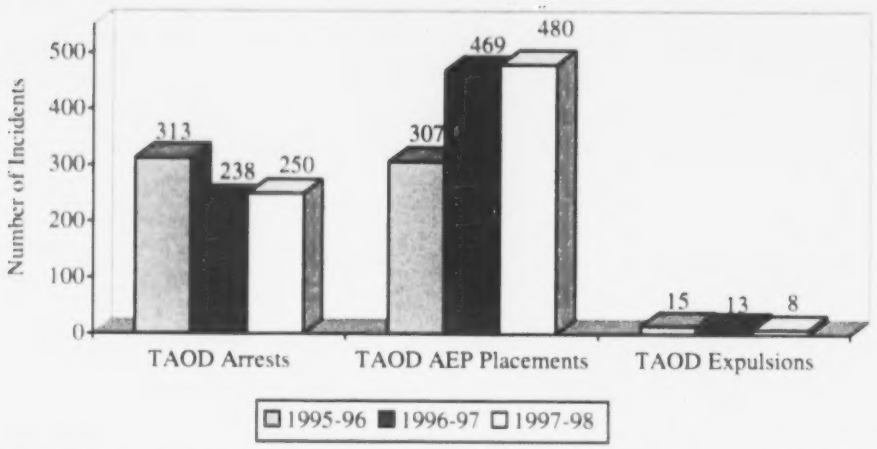
As a recipient of federal SDFSC funds through Title IV, AISD is required to report annually to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) a variety of information on the district's SDFSC-funded programs, services, and curricula, as well as on the prevalence of discipline, substance use, and violence problems in the schools. Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) staff complete an annual TEA Title IV evaluation report which contains this information. This report contains data from a wide variety of district information sources, such as district program personnel and records, budget records, student discipline records, AISD Police Department data files, student and staff surveys, and other evaluation data. Presented here are a few examples of some of the incident data taken from AISD Police files and the district's student discipline file for the past three school years. The first data set shows incidence rates for student arrests, alternative education placements (AEPs) or expulsions related to substance use (tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs). As shown in Figure 26, the number of arrests for possession, use, or delivery of substances (TAOD) dropped from 313 arrests in 1995-96 to 238 arrests in 1996-97, and has increased slightly in 1997-98 to 250. On the other hand, the rate of AEP placements for substance offenses increased from 307 in 1995-96 to 469 in 1996-97, and in 1997-98 has increased only slightly to 480. TAOD expulsions have remained low and have shown decreases over the three years (15 in 1995-96, 13 in 1996-97, and 8 in 1997-98).

Another set of indicators reported to TEA is student arrests for assaults against students and against staff. As shown in Figure 27, student arrests for assaults against students have been much higher than those for assaults against staff over the three-year period. However, the total number of student arrests for assaults against students has decreased dramatically from 627 arrests in 1996-97 to 216 arrests in 1997-98. In addition, a decrease in the number of student arrests for assaults against staff occurred between 1996-97 (138) and 1997-98 (93), reducing the number of arrests to the level in 1995-96.

All weapons confiscated by police officers on campus is another indicator that has been reported to TEA for several years. Weapons categories, as shown in Table 19, include firearms and "other weapons". "Other weapons" can include knives, clubs, blades, knuckles, or any other instrument possessed or used to inflict harm on or intimidate another person (U.S. Department of Education; Texas Penal Code 46.01). The number of all weapons confiscated by AISD police officers has decreased since 1995-96, with the number of firearms much lower (range of two to seven) than the number of other weapons (range of 21 to 29) in each school year.

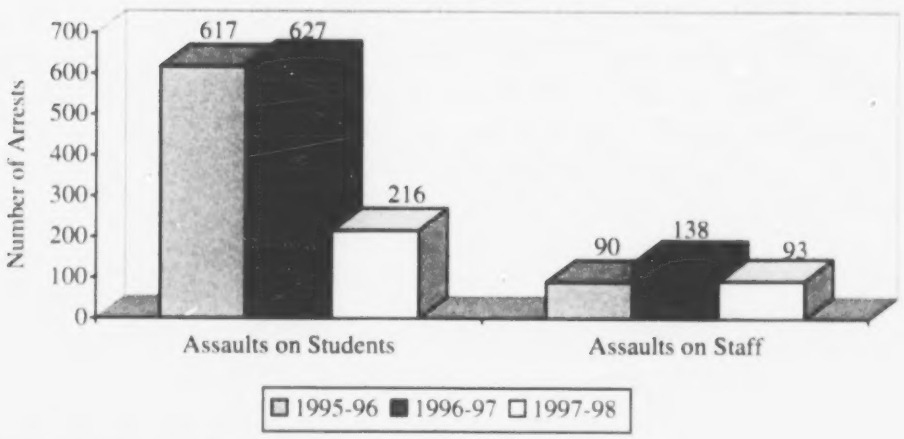
In summary, the district's incidents related to substance possession or use have remained at about the same levels. However, the district's incidents related to assaults and weapons confiscated have decreased.

Figure 26: AISD Substance Use Incidents, 1995-96 to 1997-98




Note: TAOD = Tobacco, alcohol, or other illicit drug.
*Source: AISD data files, TEA Evaluation Reports*

Figure 27: AISD Assault Arrests, 1995-96 to 1997-98




*Source: AISD data files, TEA Evaluation Reports*

Table 19: All Weapons Confiscated, 1995-96 to 1997-98

| Weapon Confiscated | 1995-96 | 1996-97 | 1997-98 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Firearms** | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| **Other Weapons** | 29 | 24 | 21 |

*Source: AISD data files, TEA Evaluation Reports*

## Conclusions and Implications of District Surveys

Based on student and staff surveys, the district's discipline database, and district police records, several statements can be made. First, a discrepancy exists between students' reported usage of various substances and staff perceptions of the presence and severity of drug problems on their campuses. For example, 41% of secondary student respondents reported having used alcohol at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey (and 18% reported they often drank five or more drinks at one time). However, most teachers (76%) and administrators (53%) either did not know if alcohol was a problem or felt this issue did not apply to their campus (implying that there was not a problem). Similar discrepancies in reported student usage and reported staff perceptions were found with illegal drugs such as marijuana. These discrepancies may be, in part, due to staff being unaware of student substance use occurring away from campus.

Second, staff familiarity with SDFSC programs and activities was notably low. For example, although DARE is a nationally recognized drug prevention program, only 30% of teachers and 18% of administrators were familiar with the program in the district. Furthermore, only 17% of teachers and 14% of administrators were familiar with AISD's current curricula for drug and violence prevention (i.e., Healthy Choices, E.S.R. II, Texas Prevention Curriculum Guide–D.A.V.E.). In addition, staff surveyed reported few SDFSC-related training opportunities or experiences. Only 17% of teachers reported having received at least one prevention-oriented training during the 1997-98 school year. Lack of training may partially explain the low levels of awareness regarding both student drug use and SDFSC programs and curricula.

Third, the student survey data suggest areas that should be targeted at the elementary and secondary levels. The TSSDAU results indicated that reported inhalant use peaked at around seventh grade and then declined at higher grades. Even though alcohol and tobacco usage rates showed a decrease at the sixth grade level in 1998 compared to previous years, these usage rates were still the highest among elementary students surveyed. Furthermore, reported usage rates for alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana generally increased with grade level. Despite students' reported usage and acknowledgement that they received information about the dangers of drugs, 36% of elementary and 21% of secondary students viewed cigarettes/tobacco as being either not very dangerous or not at all dangerous. Similar results were noted among secondary student respondents for alcohol (21%) and marijuana (31%). According to our survey, some students are using illicit substances as early as fourth grade. Given that the survey was administered beginning at the fourth grade, we can only make inferences about earlier usage rates. We can assume that children at some time will be exposed to substance use and violence. Therefore, drug and violence prevention education efforts should begin at the onset of formal education and continue until graduation if any long-lasting, persistent impact is to be made.

Fourth, an apparent discrepancy exists between students' reported use of substances on the district survey, and actual arrests, alternative education placements, and expulsions. According to the district's discipline database, less than 1% of all AISD students had at least one discipline referral for alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use. While this may indicate that student alcohol use is not a serious problem on AISD campuses, it may be that student self-reported usage rates are not completely accurate, on-campus use is not being detected or reported, or that usage occurs away from campus. Yet, according to the TSSDAU, 13% of secondary students

reported attending class while drunk on alcohol at least once during the school year and 22% reported attending class while high from marijuana. If students are coming to school in an altered state, and there are low substance abuse discipline incidence rates, this may indicate that some student drug use problems are going unnoticed. However, it is important to remember that since surveys are based on self-report, some caution is necessary in interpreting this information, even though some controls are in place for reliability and validity of student responses.

Finally, although incidence data related to school safety (such as student assaults) have shown improvement since 1997, and most students reported feeling safe at school, school safety is still an issue of concern. For instance, 20% of students reported having been physically harmed/threatened, and 11% reported physically harming another person a couple of times during the school year. Furthermore, although weapon confiscation rates were relatively low (only 25 weapons were confiscated during the school year), 19% of secondary student respondents on the TSSDAU indicated that they had brought at least one weapon to school during the school year. As with the drug data, caution is necessary when interpreting self-report data, but there is a valid concern about the potential for future campus (or off-campus) violence.

# AISD SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

# STUDENT PROGRAMS

## INTRODUCTION

This section of the report describes the AISD SDFSC-funded student programs that were supported during 1997-98. The programs varied in their structure, content and implementation. Some were campus-specific while others were district-wide. The programs that are described in this section include the following:

- Campus-based programs (public AISD campuses, and private schools participating within AISD boundaries),
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE),
- Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL),
- Reality Oriented Physical Experiential Session (ROPES), and
- Alternative education programs, namely SUPER I and Positive Families.

Some of the program-specific information that will be presented in this report was provided through the use of the AISD Office of Program Evaluation's **GEN**eric **E**valuation **SYS**tem, or GENESYS (Wilkinson, 1991). GENESYS summary information (i.e., total numbers and percentages by category) includes some of the following about student program participants:

- grade level;
- gender and ethnicity;
- low income (students who received free or reduced meals anytime during the school year);
- limited English proficiency (students who received limited English proficiency services anytime during the school year);
- overage for grade (students who are one or more years older than the expected age for students in that grade);
- special education (students who participated in any type of special education services during the school year);
- gifted/talented (students who were enrolled in one or more gifted/talented or honors classes during the school year); and,
- discipline (students who committed disciplinary infractions that resulted in suspension, expulsion or removal).

## CAMPUS-BASED PROGRAMS

1997-98 allocation: $87,769; 1997-98 monies spent: $67,995; Students served: 76,057; Cost per student served: $0.89

Campus-based programs were designed to allow school staff the latitude to initiate and create innovative programs toward a drug and violence free learning environment. Austin area private schools included in the AISD boundaries were eligible to receive SDFSC funds as were all AISD public schools on a per pupil basis. Private schools that received funding through the SDFSC grant are discussed elsewhere in this report.

Guidelines and applications for applying for funds were sent to each principal. Applications were reviewed to verify that each campus' proposed program was aligned with the goals of the SDFSC grant and the campus improvement plan. In addition, plans were checked to ensure that staff, parents, and community organizations were involved at the campus level. At the end of the school year, schools receiving SDFSC funding for campus-based programs were surveyed on their campus SDFSC activities. Schools were asked to report campus SDFSC goals and activities/purchases completed, monies spent for each activity or purchase, an opinion of the impact of each activity/purchase, and who was served by the activity/purchase. Of the 91 AISD campuses surveyed, 89 returned a completed survey. This information was used to complement other data entered in the district's 1997-98 Title IV Evaluation Report to TEA.

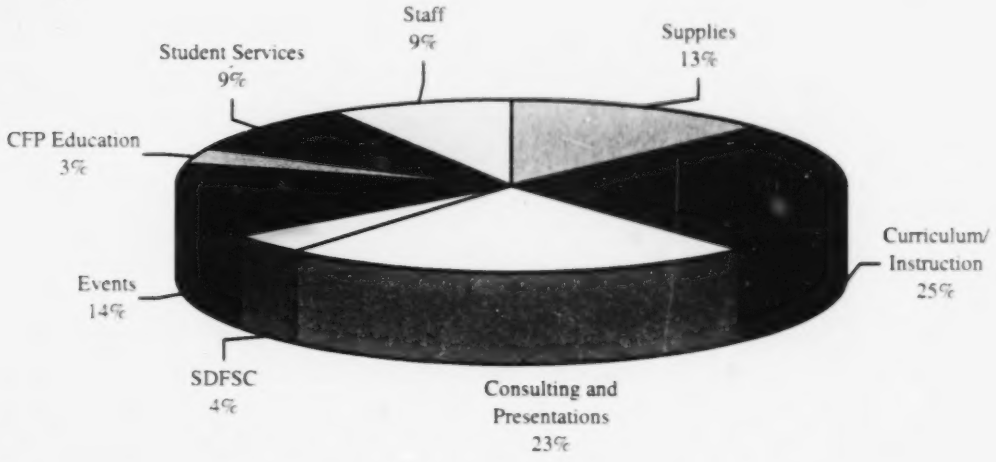
### AISD Activity/Expenditure Summary

Based on campus survey data, all campus SDFSC expenditures were categorized as follows:

- Curriculum Materials/Library Supplies: Any item bought which will be used either in the classroom for instruction or offered in the library for student usage. This includes items such as videos, books, and pre-packaged curriculum guides.
- Consulting and Presentations: Performances/discussions given by guest speakers, either in a specific classroom session or to the entire school (i.e., school assembly).
- Supplemental Support for SDFSC (SDFSC): Additional money used to include more people in SDFSC programs. For example, sending the entire fifth grade to the ROPES course or more teachers to the Student Assistance Program training.
- Special Student Activities/Events (Events): Includes conferences, field trips, retreats, events such as "Red Ribbon Week", and exchange/transition activities between vertically-aligned schools.
- Community, Family, and Parent (CFP) Education: Newsletters, educational materials for parents/families, special events to include community and family in student education (e.g., family nights at school).
- Student Services and Support: May involve forming support groups, hiring outside counselors to lead the group discussions, and forming special clubs.
- Student Supplies (Supplies): Includes the purchase of items such as ID cards, pencils, posters, t-shirts, stickers, promotional materials for events (e.g., ribbons for Red Ribbon Week).
- Staff Training (Staff): Includes conference fees, professional development, and stipends for substitute teachers.

Figure 28 depicts the distribution of funds for all AISD campuses. Overall, 25% of all AISD regular campus expenditures went towards the purchase of curriculum materials. The majority of these materials were used to supplement classroom instruction, with a smaller portion going towards library materials. Consulting/presentations accounted for the second largest expenditure of funds (23%).

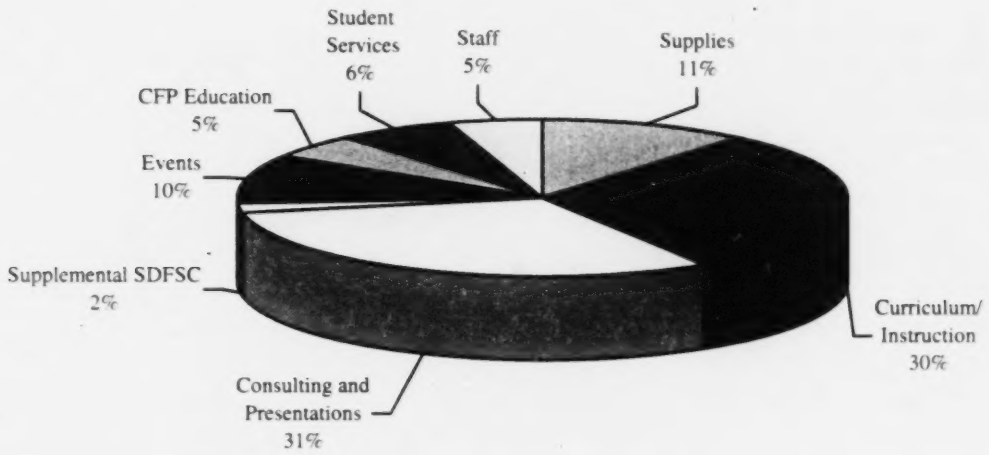
Figure 28: 1997-1998 AISD SDFSC Campus Expenditures – All Schools




*Source: SDFSC Program Records*

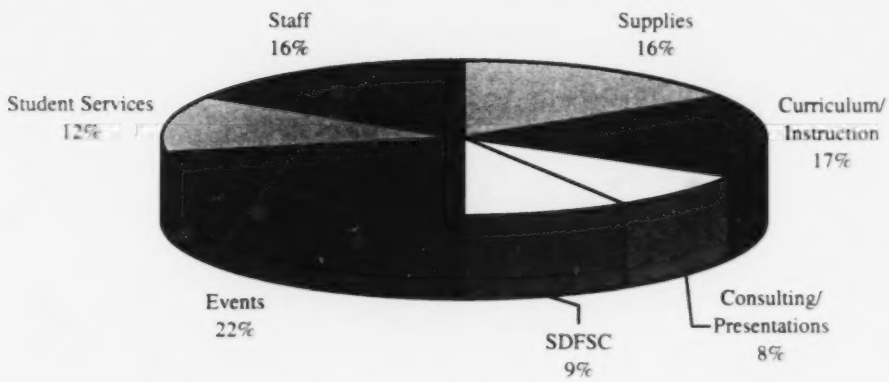
Given the unique developmental needs of the population served, the spending focus differed slightly between elementary and secondary school campuses. Figures 29 and 30 describe this difference. While the largest percentage of funding was spent on consulting and presentations at the elementary school level, secondary schools spent the greatest percentage of funds on student activities and special events. The amount spent on staff development also differed. At the elementary school campuses, only 5% of SDFSC monies were spent in this area, whereas secondary schools spent 16% of their campus allotments here. The majority of this money was used to pay substitute teachers so that regular classroom teachers could attend trainings or other workshops related to drug use and/or violence prevention. Staff would then use the information gained during the training to work with students at their home campus. Finally, there was a difference in the amount spent on consultants and presentations between elementary and secondary schools. Elementary campuses spent 31% of their funds in this area, whereas secondary campuses spent only 8%.

Figure 29: 1997-1998 AISD SDFSC Campus Expenditures – Elementary Schools




*Source: SDFSC Program Records*

Figure 30: 1997-1998 AISD Campus Expenditures – Secondary Schools




*Source: SDFSC Program Records*

In addition to the impact on students, campuses were asked if their SDFSC-funded programs served parents, staff, and other community members. Based on campus evaluation reports, 44% of AISD campus-based programs served staff, 33% served parents, and 23% served the community. Secondary school programs served more community members than did elementary school programs (28% and 20%, respectively). However, elementary school programs served more parents than did secondary school programs (36% and 28%, respectively).

Both elementary and secondary schools served comparable percentages of staff through their campus-based SDFSC programs (44% and 46%, respectively).

**AISD Special Campuses**

During 1997-98, five AISD special campuses addressed the unique needs of students who had difficulty in a traditional school environment. Four of these schools received SDFSC funding during 1997-98; however only three utilized their allocation. In addition, the Gardner-Betts Juvenile Center, a Travis County juvenile detention center utilized by AISD, received SDFSC funding for 1997-98, as well as some of the 30% supplemental monies awarded to the district. Table 20 summarizes only the regular allocations and expenditures for these special campuses during the 1997-98 school year.

Table 20: Campus Expenditures – Special Campuses

| School | Allotment | Expenditure | Use of Funds | Focus of Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baker Secondary School | $200 | $200 | Consultant fees | One-time student event/assembly |
| Clifton Center | $200 | $156 | Instructional materials | Drug/violence prevention |
| Rosedale School | $200 | $148 | Instructional materials | Drug/violence prevention |
| Gardner-Betts Juvenile Center* | $5,222 | $5,033 | Instructional materials and supplies; | Drug/violence prevention; |
| | | $200 | Travel/conference registration | Staff training |

* Gardner Betts received additional 30% supplemental monies in the amount of $58,998, of which $34,969 was expended during 1997-98 for support staff salaries and benefits.

*Source: SDFSC Program Records*

**PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

1997-98 allocation: $6,346; 1997-98 monies spent: $4,569; Students served: 1,426; Cost per student served: $3.20

By law, private schools within the district's boundaries are offered the opportunity to receive SDFSC funds for the development or expansion of comprehensive (grades prekindergarten to 12), age-appropriate prevention/education programs related to substance abuse and safety. Funds may be used for acquisition or implementation of programs, staff development, consultants, materials, supplies, equipment, and registration fees for workshops or training.

Of the 16 private schools eligible for SDFSC monies during 1997-1998, 12 reported using these funds to supplement their curriculum. Private schools used SDFSC monies in the following ways: two purchased supplies (e.g., Red Ribbons); four purchased instructional or library resource materials; one had a police presentation on drugs/alcohol, one paid consultant fees for a counselor; and three used funds to support SDFSC-type programs (two for DARE, one for staff training in the Student Assistance Program). All participating private schools rated their SDFSC purchases or activities as meeting or exceeding their intended effect. Table 21 lists the participating private schools, their allotments and expenditures, and the grade span and number of students served, based on the schools' self-report forms and district budgetary information.

In addition to serving students, private schools reported parents, community members, and campus staff were served in their SDFSC-funded activities. Specifically, of private schools receiving SDFSC funding during the 1997-98 school year, the following was reported: 67% served campus staff, 50% served parents, and 42% served community members.

Table 21: Private Schools Receiving SDFSC Funding, 1997-1998

| Private Schools | SDFSC Allotment | SDFSC Expenditures | Grade Span of Students Served | Number of Students Served |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hope Lutheran | $300 | $123 | Pre-K – 8 | 160 |
| Kirby Hall | $354 | $354 | 5 – 9 | 62 |
| Mt. Sinai Christian | $64 | $64 | Pre-K | 20 |
| Praise Christian | $150 | $150 | 5 – 8 | 20 |
| Sacred Heart Catholic | $436 | $436 | 5 – 6 | 37 |
| St. Ignatius | $520 | $520 | 4 – 8 | 104 |
| St. Louis Catholic | $940 | $940 | 5 | 49 |
| St. Martin's Lutheran | $410 | $150 | Pre-K – 5 | 195 |
| St. Mary's Cathedral | $440 | $319 | Pre-K – 8 | 205 |
| St. Michael's | $740 | $740 | 9 – 12 | 357 |
| St. Paul Lutheran | $440 | $400 | K – 8 | 167 |
| St. Theresa's School | $500 | $373 | 4 – 6 | 49 |
| **Total*** | **$5,294** | **$4,569** | **Pre-K – 12** | **1,426** |

*This total allotment of $5,294 represents only those schools for which monies were spent.
*Source: SDFSC Program Records*

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## DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION (DARE)

1997-98 allocation: $22,289; 1997-98 monies spent: $19,929; Students served: 5,725; Cost per student served: $3.48

### History and Purpose

Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) is a cooperative educational effort between AISD and the Austin Police Department (APD). Developed by the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1983, the DARE curriculum was introduced to 20 AISD elementary schools during the 1987-88 school year. Between 1989 and 1995, DARE was conducted in all 67 elementary and 15 middle/junior high schools in the district (fifth and seventh grades). However, due to APD budgetary and staff cutbacks, DARE was implemented only at the fifth grade level beginning in the 1996-1997 school year. During 1997-1998, fifth graders in one-half of the elementary campuses received the program during the fall semester and all other fifth graders received it during the spring semester. The 17-week fifth grade curriculum, taught by uniformed police officers, focuses on providing accurate information about alcohol and drugs, building self-esteem, and teaching students decision-making skills, peer pressure resistance techniques, and positive alternatives to drug use.

SDFSC monies paid for curriculum materials, officer training, and general program support. A DARE office was provided at Allan Elementary School. Officer salaries, mileage, and some reproduction costs were paid by APD. Area businesses provided additional support by donating t-shirts, bumper stickers, and other promotional materials. DARE officers also initiated fundraising efforts to supplement the cost of promotional materials for the students.

### Student Characteristics

During 1997-98, DARE served approximately 5,725 fifth-grade students in AISD. Appendix D provides some summary characteristics of DARE students served.

### Methods of Evaluation

#### *DARE Student Test of Knowledge*

A DARE knowledge test was administered to students in order to assess the effects of the DARE program on students' knowledge of drug-related issues such as peer pressure, decision-making, and effects of drug use. Due to scheduling limitations, the DARE student test was administered only to a randomized sample of fifth grade students who were taking DARE during the spring semester, 1998. The test was administered as a pre- and post-test. The pretest was given to 333 students at the beginning of the DARE class in January 1998 and an identical post-test was given to 229 at the end of the DARE program in May 1998. Post-tests for only 11 of the 16 classes were returned to the Office of Program Evaluation. Therefore, the results discussed here may not be representative of all 1997-98 DARE participants.

The DARE student test contains 30 multiple-choice questions. The psychometric properties of this instrument have not been established. Therefore, the test should be regarded as a somewhat informal measure of student knowledge. For each test question, there was an increase between the percentage of students who answered correctly on the pretest and the

percentage of students who answered correctly on the posttest. Average gains of greater than 14% between pretest and posttest results are indicated as follows:

- *Increased understanding of the meaning of consequences.* On the pretest, 44% of students answered correctly that consequences could be the result of something you do or choose to do. On the posttest, 67% of students answered this item correctly.
- *Increased knowledge of ways to say no to offers of alcohol and other drugs.* On the pretest, 63% of students answered knew the least effective method of refusing alcohol or drugs. On the posttest, 85% answered this item correctly.
- *Better understanding of the meaning of the word stressor.* On the pretest, 61% of students correctly identified a stressor as any situation that puts strain or mental pressure on a person. On the posttest, 82% answered correctly.
- *Improved ability to distinguish between a commercial advertisement and a public service announcement.* On the pretest, 41% of students knew the difference between the two. On the posttest, 71% were able to distinguish between the two types of media information.
- *Increased understanding of the physical effects of alcohol.* On the pretest, 28% of students knew that alcohol was a drug that slowed the body down. On the posttest, 42% were answered correctly.

***DARE Officer Survey and Interview***

In a spring 1998 interview, seven of the eight DARE officers discussed their opinions of the DARE program and curriculum. Officers discussed the strengths of DARE, concerns or problems with DARE, and recommendations for improving DARE.

Strengths of DARE

Officers considered the DARE *program* to be effective in the following areas:

- Increasing the level of students' trust in and cooperation with police officers;
- Teaching students the following: the effects of drugs and alcohol; skills for resisting negative peer pressure; and skills to use in a classroom setting;
- Delivering a "no use" message about drugs and alcohol;
- Teaching decision-making and refusal skills; and,
- Teaching students about the consequences of their behaviors.

Officers considered the DARE *curriculum* to be effective in the following ways:

- Three learning modalities (i.e. visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) in its teaching methodology are used;
- Issues related to drugs and violence such as self-esteem and stress are discussed;
- The officers provide knowledge of relevant drug and gang violence issues which classroom teachers may not have;
- The curriculum presented is appropriate for the fifth grade level; and,
- Curriculum flexibility allows the officers to adjust the lesson plan for discussion of relevant issues while still covering the necessary material.

Concerns About DARE

The officers identified the following areas as major *concerns or problems* with DARE:

- Uncertainty as to whether or not the DARE program would be continued in the next school year;
- Lack of administrative support for the program by AISD and APD;
- Need for adequate staffing (officers) and budget resources to implement DARE;
- Need to get more classroom teachers involved in students' DARE class sessions;
- Many APD officers not being aware of what the DARE program is about and why it is important;
- The DARE parental involvement component not being implemented due to funding shortages; and,
- Media focus on negative student behavior resulting in accusations of program ineffectiveness, due to lack of knowledge on the part of the media, community, and parents.

Recommendations for DARE

The DARE officers offered the following *recommendations* for the DARE program:

- The entire DARE curriculum should be implemented as it was originally designed in order to be most effective (i.e., pre-kindergarten – 12, parent education, and teacher participation).
- At the very least, the DARE curriculum should be implemented at more than one grade level.
- More teacher and parental involvement is needed to support what the students learn and experience in DARE.
- In-service education should be provided to both teachers and APD officers to educate them about the purpose of the DARE program.
- Increased funding for DARE staff is needed in order to implement DARE as it was designed.
- Increased support is needed from AISD (e.g., central administration, school board) and APD (e.g., police chief, other high ranking officers).

***DARE Program Manager Interview***

The DARE program manager discussed changes made in the program during the school year, positive outcomes achieved, and programmatic changes anticipated for next year. Additionally, the program manager discussed program funding, support, and evaluation. In general, the program remained the same as in the previous year. However, during the 1997-98 school year the officers decided to recognize student achievement by hosting two pep rallies, one in the fall semester and one in the spring. These provided students with an opportunity, other than the DARE graduation ceremony, to be recognized in public. These events also allowed the officers an opportunity to provide positive role modeling outside of the classroom as well as drug-free entertainment for the students.

According to the program manager, a positive outcome of this year's program was the fundraising effort initiated by the officers. Periodically, a "DARE Night Out" was held in which DARE students were offered discounted tickets to area events (e.g., Austin Ice Bats, Austin Cyclones, skating parties) in exchange for a donation made by the organization hosting the event. In addition to raising needed funds for the DARE program, these efforts provided the students

with an opportunity to do something positive with the officers and, oftentimes, with their parents and other family members.

Other general comments about DARE from the program manager included the following:

- On *program funding*, the program manager was in agreement with the DARE officers that the amount allocated to the program was insufficient to fully implement the DARE program as it was designed. In addition, funding should be shared more equally between APD and AISD.
- There is considerable *student and parent support* for the program. Community members tend to support the program as well, despite not having a good understanding of its content.
- APD and AISD *administrations lack first-hand knowledge* of the program. This results in a lack of awareness of the tangible benefits, which ultimately affects decisions about the life of the program. Increased efforts to educate AISD and APD administrations about the DARE program are needed to improve understanding of the DARE program.
- *Evaluation* of the program can be improved by tracking students on a more long-term basis to determine effectiveness of the DARE curriculum.

**Summary Note**

During late July 1998, the Austin Police Department notified AISD that the DARE officers would no longer be teaching DARE in AISD schools. The APD officers were reassigned to street patrol duty. At this time, there is some consideration of having campus resource officers (SROs) (AISD police assigned to each of the secondary campuses) become more involved in AISD classrooms to work with teaching staff in the delivery of prevention curriculum materials. [For example, the Project YES! pilot project, implemented during 1997-98, had officers teaching a prevention curriculum to a select number of classes. See Sharkey (1998) for a complete description of the Project YES! pilot project.]

## PEER ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP (PAL)

1997-98 allocation: $36,000; 1997-98 monies spent: $32,732; Students served: 1,053; Cost per student served: $31.08

### History and Purpose

The Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) program has been in AISD since 1980. PAL is a peer-helping program offering course credit to selected eighth, eleventh, and twelfth graders who function as peer helpers ("PALs") to other students ("PALees") at their own school as well as at feeder schools. High school and middle school PALs are linked with PALees who are either at the same school level (e.g., middle school PAL and middle school PALee) or at a lower level (e.g., high school PAL and middle school PALee). During regularly scheduled visits, PALs talk with their PALees about a variety of topics including self-esteem, substance use, decision-making, and relationships. They also provide tutoring as needed.

The goal of the PAL program is to help students have a more positive and productive school experience. To reach this goal, PAL students work towards achieving the following objectives:

- Provide both individual and group peer support;
- Help prevent students from dropping out of school;
- Help students make more informed and responsible decisions;
- Promote improved behavior and school attendance;
- Encourage improvement in academic performance; and,
- Provide tutoring.

PAL students received 20 hours of training per semester. Additionally, the first six-week reporting period was devoted to classroom training with the PAL supervising teacher. The training covered a number of topics including self-awareness, group dynamics, communication skills, helping strategies, problem-solving, decision-making skills, tutoring skills, knowledge of school/community resources, conflict resolution, and substance abuse prevention. Substance abuse prevention information was presented by invited guest speakers (e.g., visiting community experts), and through videotapes. After the first six weeks of PAL training, PAL students began meeting with their PALees. During the course of the school year, PALs also performed community service projects of their choosing (to be described later in program manager interview section). PALs worked under the supervision of the PAL teacher and guidance counselors at their campuses.

### Student Characteristics

Fifteen PAL schools (middle and high) worked with thirty-four PALee schools (elementary, middle, and high) during the 1997-98 school year. Approximately 317 PAL students provided assistance to 736 PALee students. Appendix D describes some summary characteristics of the PAL and PALee students served during 1997-98.

**Methods of Evaluation**

***PAL/PALee Activity Report***

As part of the course requirements, PAL students kept a journal and completed activity reports every six weeks. The six-week reports provided information on the type and frequency of topics discussed by PALs and PALees during their meetings. Table 22 reflects the approximate percentages of time that each topic was discussed during the PAL/PALee meetings. Note that more than one topic could be addressed during each meeting. Additionally, all six-week activity reports were not received from every school. Therefore, the data described here do not represent the complete percentages of activities from all PAL groups. The most commonly addressed topics were tutoring (65.1%) and substance abuse (47.9%).

Table 22: Description of PAL Activities, 1997-98

| Content of PAL/PALee Discussions | Percent of Times Topic Addressed During 1997-98 School Year* |
|---|---|
| Tutoring | 65.1% |
| Substance Abuse | 47.9% |
| Decisions and Behavior | 44.7% |
| School (attendance, academic issues) | 39.9% |
| Relationships (family, peers, teachers) | 30.8% |
| Self-Concept | 30.7% |

*PALs and PALees may discuss more than one topic per session.
*Source: SDFSC program files*

***Focus Group Interviews***

In order to provide more complete information on the effectiveness of the PAL program, focus group interviews of program participants were conducted during spring 1998. Two PAL high schools and two PALee middle schools were approached for participation. However, due to scheduling difficulties, only students and teachers from one high school/middle school PAL/PALee pairing were interviewed. Focus group interviews were conducted with a high school PAL group, a selection of middle school PALees from the paired PALee school, and the supervising PAL and PALee teachers at these schools. This section will summarize the results of those interviews.

PAL Focus Group Interview

Ten high school PAL students participated in a group interview about the PAL program in March 1998. Students discussed their reasons for becoming a PAL, what issues they discussed with their PALee, potential benefits of the program for themselves and their PALee, and recommendations for improving the PAL program. As part of the PAL program, this particular group visited two elementary schools and one middle school. However, in order to address the unique characteristics of a high school/middle school PAL/PALee pairing, PAL students were asked to comment only on issues concerning the middle school PALees with whom they worked.

The PALs gave the following *reasons* for choosing to become a PAL:

- The program provided them with the opportunity to work with other students from their home school and other schools in the district.
- The program allowed them to serve as positive role models to younger students.
- They wanted the opportunity to give back to their community through community service projects.

PALs indicated they had *benefited* from the program in the following ways:

- Increased patience in dealing with younger students;
- Increased sensitivity to and knowledge of the potentially negative events which may occur in other people's lives;
- Increased knowledge of the extent to which young people pick up on and acquire the behaviors of older individuals;
- Development of special bonds/friendships with other PAL students; and,
- Increased ability to work through and solve problems with their peers through classroom discussion and conflict situations.

Due to the program, PALs also reported the following skills that would benefit *their future*:

- Strengthened ability to accept differing ideas despite a person's background;
- Increased tolerance of personality and cultural differences;
- Increased maturity level by helping them to become more responsible; and,
- Increased ability to adapt to a variety of situations.

PAL students reported the following *improvements* they perceived in their middle school PALee students:

- Decreased fighting with other students;
- Improved in reading skills;
- Increased interest in school; and,
- Increased ability to see the positive aspects of life.

Students' *recommendations* for improving the PALprogram included:

- Improving the orientation for incoming PAL students by providing more information on all aspects of program participation;
- Increasing the amount of time working on the development of the core PAL team including group dynamics;
- Having more than one PAL conference in order to improve communication between PAL programs at different campuses; and,
- More training on working with PALee students including development of rapport and communication skills.

PAL Teacher Interview

The high school PAL teacher interviewed had been a PAL program supervisor for eight years. The PAL students had nominated the teacher and, upon learning more about the program, the teacher decided it was a perfect opportunity to work with students in a unique situation. Prior

to beginning tenure as a PAL teacher, this individual attended a training workshop conducted by the PAL program director and several PAL program specialists.

The teacher reported that PAL students are selected through a process involving both the PAL teacher and the current PAL class. At this particular school, PAL students for the upcoming school year were chosen during the previous spring semester. According to the PAL teacher interviewed, the PAL selection process involves the following steps:

- A student identifies him/herself as being interested in becoming a PAL, or a teacher or current PAL member recommends a student to the program.
- The PAL teacher and current PAL students interview the prospective PAL students.
- Recommendation sheets are sent to all of the prospective PAL students' teachers and counselors.
- Based on this information, the current PAL students and the PAL teacher meet to determine the final selection.

At this particular campus, 20 PALs are chosen to participate each year. During the 1997-1998 school year, the PAL class at this teacher's school consisted of five returning PAL students from 1996-97 and 15 new PALs. In order to provide an opportunity for as many students as possible to become a PAL, students are allowed to participate in the PAL program for no more than two years at this campus.

The PAL teacher also discussed positive changes seen in the PAL and PALee students during the 1997-98 school year. According to the PAL teacher, program participation *helped PAL* students:

- Learn to work together as a group;
- Become more service oriented by learning how to reach out and help others in their community;
- Increase their commitment to remain drug-free and tobacco-free;
- Develop leadership skills and increase self-esteem; and,
- Gain a stronger sense of responsibility towards others, especially younger peers.

According to the PAL teacher, program benefits *for the PALees* included:

- Availability of an older peer, who they consider a buddy or good friend, to help them academically;
- Access to someone who had recently gone through similar experiences who could help guide them into making positive behavioral choices;
- Increased level of self-esteem and feeling of empowerment; and,
- Focused on staying in school and preparing for the transition to high school.

The PAL teacher suggested the following *improvements* for the PAL program:

- Implement a PAL program at every high school; and,
- Increase publicity for the program to educate the school district about what the PAL program does for students.

PALee Focus Group Interview

Five middle school PALee students discussed issues concerning their participation in the PAL program including perceived benefits, topics covered with their PALs, and

recommendations for improving the program. According to the PALee students, the following *topics* are usually discussed during a PAL/PALee meeting:

- Remaining drug/alcohol free;
- Ways to resist peer pressure about drugs;
- Reasons for staying out of trouble; and,
- How to make positive behavioral decisions.

PALees listed the following as *benefits* from participation in the program:

- Having an older person to talk to who is like a big brother/sister;
- Knowing they can share personal information with their PAL and it will not "go around the school"; and,
- Having a positive role model.

PALees saw the following *changes in themselves* since participating in the PAL program:

- Getting into trouble at school less often;
- Improved attitude towards family and friends; and,
- Improved academic performance.

PALees made the following *recommendations* for improving the PAL program:

- More time spent with PALs, including having PALs come more than once a week; and,
- Meet with PALs off school grounds (e.g., in a nearby park).

PALee Teacher Interview

The middle school PALee teacher interviewed at the selected school was supervising the PALee program for the first time. This individual is a special education teacher who decided to be a PALee teacher in order to help special education students get more involved in activities at school. During this school year, 20 PALee students were selected at this middle school to be matched with PAL students. Eighth graders were given preference for selection in an effort to prepare them for the transition to high school. Those students who had a history of behavior and/or academic problems in the school filled the remaining positions.

The PALee teacher reported the following *positive changes* in the PALee students since participation began:

- Students who had been shy and non-communicative became more outgoing and sociable;
- Increased self-esteem;
- Decreased fear of the transition to high school; and,
- Decreased class absences and tardiness.

The PALee teacher believed the main reason these changes occurred was the formation of a friendship between the PAL and PALee. In the teacher's opinion, this friendship provided the PALee with a positive role model who would continue to care no matter what the PALee did. The teacher added that another contributing factor to the effectiveness of the PAL program was having an older person within the PALee's own peer group for whom PALees had respect and trust.

One component of the program the PALee teacher felt needed improvement was the amount of time the PALs and PALees spent with each other. The PAL and PALee teachers have

discussed changes in the program that will increase the amount of time PALs will be able to spend with their PALees during the 1998-1999 school year.

***PAL Program Manager Interview***

The PAL program manager discussed 1997-1998 program goals, positive outcomes achieved, and programmatic changes anticipated for next year. Additionally, the program manager commented on program funding, support, and evaluation. The manager indicated that as part of the requirements of the PAL program, PAL students must complete a community service project during the school year. PALs in Community Service Learning (PCSL) provides the PALs with an opportunity to reach out to their community and perform a needed service. At the beginning of the 1997-98 school year, the program manager and the PAL teachers met to discuss two proposed projects for the year. The program manager reported that the middle schools were to spend a day at McKinney Falls State Park during which they would clean up trash and receive a presentation on environmental issues. This event was to take place on April 17, 1998. The high school students were scheduled to perform similar duties at Bastrop State Park. However, due to other conflicting school events in the spring semester, student turnout was expected to be too low to accomplish the projected tasks, and these events were canceled.

However, there were other PCSL projects that PAL students successfully completed. For example, students participated in the "Third International Day Without Violence." The event, held on April 4, 1998, included a parade in downtown Austin commemorating world leaders of the anti-violence movement. PAL students from one of the high schools initiated the project, with other PAL groups joining in as the planning process progressed. Other community service projects completed during the year included visits to nursing homes and other service agencies in the community. According to the program manager, the 1998-99 PCSL projects which involve multiple schools (e.g. the McKinney Falls project described earlier) will take place in the fall semester rather than the spring to avoid scheduling conflicts.

The program manager reported that outstanding PAL students are acknowledged every year through the presentation of three awards. The "PAL of the Year" award is given to a select group of outstanding PALs in each PAL school. Depending upon enrollment, each class elects one to four students who have excelled in their performance as a PAL that year. The students' names are engraved on a plaque displayed at the school, and each student awarded receives a statuette. The PCSL Award is given to the PAL student who has excelled in the area of community service. During the 1997-1998 school year, this award was given to a high school PAL who had performed over 800 hours of community service during two years in the PAL program. Finally, the Director's Award is given to one student selected by the program manager as the most outstanding PAL in the district. The student is selected based upon nominations made by the PAL teachers.

In conclusion, the PAL program manager listed the following goals for the 1998-1999 school year:

- More time devoted to in-service training for teachers;
- Regular meetings scheduled for PAL teachers to get together and discuss issues of common concern; and,
- Provide evaluation feedback to the PAL student participants.

***Follow-up of Last Year's PALee Participants***

Using the district's discipline database, PALee participants from 1996-97 were tracked during 1997-98 to determine number of discipline offenses committed. These data will be used as a baseline for tracking PALee participants' discipline records over time. Table 23 summarizes these findings. Of the 940 PALees served by the PALee program last year, only 29 (3%) had at least one discipline offense on record. Note that one student may have more than one discipline offense on record for the school year. There were a total of 34 offenses recorded. Of these, the majority (62%) was for abusive conduct toward either staff or another student. Other offenses reported included drugs (e.g., use, possession, under the influence) and illegal weapons.

Table 23: 1997-98 Discipline Offenses for 1996-97 PALee Participants

| All 1996-97 PALees Served | Number with at Least One Offense | Offense: Abusive Conduct | Offense: Drugs | Offense: Illegal Weapons |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Elementary PALees (N = 294)** | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| **Middle School PALees (N = 514)** | 17 | 20 | 1 | 1 |
| **High School PALees (N = 132)** | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total (N = 940)** | 29 | 32 | 1 | 1 |

*Source: AISD Discipline database*

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

All those taking part in the interview process agreed that the program had a positive effect not only on the PALee students, but on the PAL students as well. Positive outcomes of the program for PAL students that were mentioned by interviewees included improved group processing and problem-solving skills, development of leadership skills (including responsibility towards others), and increased level of tolerance towards individual differences. Positive outcomes for the PALee students that were mentioned included improved academic performance, decreased behavioral problems (e.g., school absences), and increased self-esteem. All components of the PAL program (i.e., PAL/PALee meetings, PCSL, PAL awards) were cited by staff as contributing to these benefits.

The program manager felt that program objectives were met, but the manager cited the following areas of improvement for the 1998-99 school year:

- Schedule community service projects for the fall semester to avoid conflict with spring school events;
- Increase the number of in-service trainings for PAL teachers;
- Improve data collection procedures for all PAL teachers; and,
- Provide evaluation feedback to PAL students.

Additionally, PAL/PALee teachers as well as PAL/PALee students agreed that more time is needed for the PAL/PALee meetings. The teachers of the two PAL programs utilized for

the focus groups have discussed ways to achieve this goal for the upcoming school year. The focus group interviews proved to be a successful and effective method of acquiring additional qualitative information on the PAL program. Therefore, to improve the evaluation, this component will be expanded to include more PAL and PALee schools in interviews during the 1998-99 school year. Finally, the follow-up evaluation of 1996-97 PALees' discipline offenses provided one way of measuring long-term program impact on student participants. This data, and other variables to be added in future evaluations, will be tracked each year in the district's databases.

## REALITY ORIENTED PHYSICAL EXPERIENTIAL SESSION (ROPES)

1997-98 allocation: $120,939; 1997-98 monies spent: $119,569; Students served: 2,652; Staff served: 834; Cost per district participant (student and staff) served: $34.29

### Program History and Description

The Reality Oriented Physical Experiential Session (ROPES) program is operated by staff in AISD's Office of School-Community Services. During the 1990-91 school year, AISD staff developed and implemented the ROPES program, a retreat workshop designed to serve both AISD students and staff. The ROPES program is a series of team-building exercises revolving around a set of physical challenges, in part borrowing features from similar programs such as Outward Bound and the U.S. Army Confidence Course. The experiential education activities in which students engage are designed to develop such skills as team building, trust, communication, decision making, problem solving, and negative peer pressure resistance.

The implementation of ROPES activities that impart the "no use" message to students was instrumental in influencing the Frost Bank to underwrite the construction of a fully equipped ROPES facility on AISD property near Norman Elementary in 1994. Since that time, this facility has provided experiential activities for over 10,000 individuals.

During the 1997-1998 school year, 2,652 students and 834 campus staff and other adults participated in AISD's ROPES Program. SDFSC monies were used to pay the salaries for the program manager, two staff facilitators, substitutes to allow participation by teachers, transportation costs, program support (e.g., supplies), and staff development (e.g., conference, certification).

### Program Implementation

The entire ROPES program consists of five phases. During Phase I, teachers are trained in strategies for facilitating small group activities and processing group learning. Phase II entails student orientation, in which students are introduced to program activities by ROPES staff and teacher facilitators. Phase III involves a day long retreat at the ROPES course in which students and teacher facilitators participate in experiential educational activities designed to develop leadership skills, trust, communication, collective problem-solving, and negative peer pressure resistance. The classroom teacher provides Phase IV to the students by linking students' ROPES experiences with personally relevant life experiences through brainstorming and role-playing techniques.

In Phase IV, more than in any other, the no-use drug message is promoted. In previous years, a ROPES course facilitator taught this phase. However, in order to accommodate the voluminous increase in requests for ROPES, AISD administrative staff decided to provide the accompanying campus teachers/counselors with the training, curriculum, and responsibilities of facilitating Phase IV. This change had varying levels of success, as will be discussed later on in this section. The final phase, Phase V, involves a second full-day retreat during which the students once again practice their decision making, communication, and problem-solving skills. Elementary student workshops include only the first four phases of the program, eliminating Phase V in order to serve more students from those schools. Secondary student workshops usually have all five program phases, as scheduling allows.

**Goals and Objectives**

The goal of the ROPES program is to impart a no-use message to students to convey that drug use is wrong and harmful. Through the development of specific skills learned during participation, it is hoped that this message will help prevent students from illegally using drugs or alcohol. To accomplish this goal, ROPES facilitators focus on achieving the following objectives:

- Increase student's level of self-confidence;
- Improve student's ability to make decisions, work in groups, solve problems, make better choices, share ideas, listen to others; and,
- Help students see themselves as leaders through the development of leadership skills.

**Student Participants**

Each school year, SDFSC monies pay for groups from all 25 secondary and 10 selected elementary schools to attend the ROPES program. The district's Area Superintendents select these elementary schools. Priority is given to schools that have not yet attended the ROPES program, based upon a system of rotation. Additionally, some elementary schools will lobby for space, citing special needs within their schools as a reason for preference in selection. Once these schools are scheduled, other AISD schools and external community organizations may register for remaining times on the ROPES activity schedule for the year. However, those elementary schools that participate but are not part of the original 10 must pay for their own transportation to and from the ROPES course. The data summarized in this report are based solely upon those schools originally selected to participate in the ROPES program (i.e., all secondary schools and 10 elementary schools) that completed all phases. Note that only two of the high schools originally scheduled to participate in ROPES were able to attend the full training due to poor weather conditions. Furthermore, these two high schools did not return the evaluation surveys to the ROPES staff. Therefore, data are unavailable for these schools. Finally, not all schools returned student participant lists to program staff. Therefore, Appendix D provides summary characteristics only of those 1997-98 ROPES participants for whom a student identification number was made available for analysis.

**Staff Participants**

For safety and successful program operation, at least one teacher and two other adults accompany all student groups attending ROPES. Often, parents will join the group as one of the additional adult chaperones. During the 1997-1998 school year, 834 school staff and other adults attended and participated in the ROPES course with students. However, it is the students who determine the best solution to the problems presented at each segment of the course. Therefore, students are allowed the opportunity to take a leadership role with both their peers and adult participants. Of the 834 adults in attendance, 50% were teachers, 45% were school counselors and administrators, and 5% were parents/family members.

**Methods of Evaluation**

In addition to gathering demographic and academic data on participants, several other evaluation methods were used for the ROPES program. Two surveys, one for students and one for participating staff, were completed after Phase IV of the program. Additionally, ROPES

program facilitators were interviewed at the end of the school year. Finally, a follow up of last year's ROPES participants was conducted to examine whether students had committed discipline offenses during 1997-98. Information obtained from these sources will be summarized in this section.

***ROPES Student Survey Results***

Based on ROPES student respondents (n=630), the student survey data indicate that the ROPES program was successful in achieving its intended goals and objectives. The majority of students agreed that, due to participation in ROPES, they were better able to:

- Make decisions (81%), and make better choices for themselves (81%);
- Work in groups (86%);
- Solve problems (82%);
- Share ideas (82%); and,
- Listen to others (83%).

Additionally, the majority of students agreed that they were more self-confident (74%).

Students were asked two questions about substance use. First, when asked whether they had learned about the risks of alcohol/drug use during ROPES, 59% of respondents agreed, 21% replied "not sure", and 20% disagreed. Second, when asked about whether they intended to use alcohol/drugs illegally, given their new knowledge and experience, 82% responded that they did not intend to use drugs or alcohol, 11% were not sure, and 7% said they would use alcohol/drugs anyway. However, it is important to remember when interpreting this self-report data that no controls were made for exaggerated responses.

***ROPES Staff Survey Results***

The staff survey provided information on staff perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROPES program in achieving program objectives. Results from staff survey respondents (n=44) indicated an overall favorable view of the effectiveness of the ROPES program. The majority of staff agreed that, due to participation in ROPES, students were able to:

- Increase self-confidence levels (74%),
- Improve leadership skills (91%),
- Learn how to make responsible choices (76%),
- Increase positive interactions with other students (86%),
- Increase positive interactions with teachers (78%), and,
- Learn about the negative consequences of drug and alcohol use (70%).

Additionally, all staff respondents agreed that participation in the ROPES program was a valuable use of their time, 98% agreed it was a valuable use of student time, and 98% agreed it was a valuable use of district resources.

***Program Staff Interviews***

The three AISD staff that lead the ROPES program have attended the minimum 80-hour standard training and have many years of experience. The three facilitators receive yearly certification from one of the Texas certifying agencies (Peak Experience or Experiential Challenge Programs). They also have received certification in CPR and First Aid by the American Red Cross. In an interview, the facilitators discussed the following: effects of the

program on participants; program changes during the year; suggestions for future program changes or improvements; and, recommendations for additions or changes to the evaluation methods currently being used.

Program staff noted that the positive outcomes for *students* from ROPES included reported increases in the following:

- Self-esteem and empowerment;
- Ability to brainstorm and problem solve;
- Ability to set goals and make a plan for success;
- Respect for fellow students; and,
- Ability to evaluate one's actions, and apply what has been learned to other parts of their lives and to future situations.

According to program staff, positive outcomes for *teachers* from ROPES included:

- ROPES helped improve classroom experiences for both teachers and students. Bonds between students were formed during ROPES that helped students to be more cooperative and better able to work together on tasks.
- Teachers were able to see a different side of students, especially "troublemakers" who turned out to be the leaders and key problem-solvers.
- Teachers were put in role-reversal situations that allowed students to master problem-solving and leadership skills, and allowed teachers to improve their listening and observing skills.
- ROPES helped educate the teachers about the benefits of the experiential learning model.

According to the ROPES staff, these outcomes were possible due to a number of contributing factors. First, the *experiential* nature of the training was a key element in producing the effects listed above. This type of training actively engages students in their own learning, making them more motivated to participate and learn. The active participation by the students facilitates the acquisition of key skills such as problem solving and decision making. In addition to the experiential training, a second key element in producing the outcomes listed is the *processing* which occurs after each event. Once an activity is completed, students and staff discuss the activity and apply the experience to other aspects of their lives. They are free to express emotions that result from participation, opinions about how the activity was carried out, and suggestions for ways to improve in the future. The ROPES facilitators consider this step to be crucial in solidifying and validating the experience as well as extending the application of the activity beyond the ROPES program. Finally, in relaying the "no-use" message, facilitators help students *associate* how being "high" can affect their *performance*, and thus, affect their *safety* (e.g., "Would you want to be caught by your peers during a 'trust fall' if some of them were 'high'?"). The facilitators also associate consequences, actions, and decisions with drug use (e.g. "How does using drugs affect your control of your body and your mind?").

Although all phases of the ROPES course were accomplished successfully to achieve the above stated positive outcomes, ROPES staff noted the following difficulties resulting from the transfer of Phase IV administration to the campuses:

- Some teachers who facilitated Phase IV may not have attended the earlier ROPES course workshop, and thus, may not have felt adequately prepared.

- Time restrictions at school may have dictated that only part or none of Phase IV was presented.

To rectify these problems and make the process more efficient, the facilitators made several suggestions for modifying the program in the future; including the addition of a fourth ROPES course staff person. An additional facilitator would allow Phase IV to be presented by a trained and certified individual, thus ensuring the objectives of the course are achieved. Having an additional staff person also would allow more AISD students and staff to participate in the ROPES program. Another suggestion made by ROPES staff was to place posters with no-use messages in strategic locations at the ROPES facility in order to remind students of the overall reason for participation in the course. One final suggestion was made to modify the instrument used to evaluate elementary student participation to make it more developmentally appropriate (e.g., in terms of the wording and questions asked).

***Follow-up of 1996-97 ROPES Participants***

ROPES participants from 1996-97 were followed up in 1997-98 to determine the number of discipline offenses committed during 1997-98. This data will be used as a baseline for tracking ROPES student participant discipline records over time. Table 24 summarizes these findings. Of the 1,852 students served by the ROPES program in 1996-97, only 34 (2%) had at least one discipline offense on record. Note that one student may have more than one discipline offense on record for the school year. There were a total of 63 offenses recorded. Of these, the majority (52%) was for abusive conduct toward either another student or an adult. The second most common (43%) was drug offenses (e.g., possession, use, under the influence). For high school students only, the majority (60%) was drug offenses. The most common offense among middle and elementary school students was abusive conduct against another student (88% and 50%, respectively).

Table 24: 1997-98 Discipline Offenses for 1996-97 ROPES Participants

| 1996-97 ROPES Students Served | Number With at Least One Offense | Offense: Abusive Conduct | Offense: Drugs | Offense: Property | Offense: Tobacco | Offense: Illegal Weapons |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary (N = 1,260) | 10 | 15 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Middle School (N = 496) | 6 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| High School (N = 96) | 18 | 12 | 23 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total = 1,852 | 34 | 33 | 27 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

*Source: AISD discipline database*

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The ROPES program was considered a successful and effective component of the overall 1997-98 SDFSC program since the results indicated that goals and objectives were met. However, ROPES facilitators recommended the following improvements to the administration of the ROPES program:

- The addition of a fourth ROPES course facilitator;
- The administration of Phase IV of the program by a trained ROPES course facilitator;
- The development and display of posters that contain a "no-use" message throughout the course; and,
- The modification of the evaluation instruments that would make the surveys developmentally appropriate.

During the 1998-99 school year, AISD evaluation staff will meet with the ROPES facilitators to address these issues. In addition, to help determine the long-term impact of ROPES, students who have participated in ROPES will be tracked each year on several variables from the district's databases and through some focus group interview strategies.

## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Alternative Learning Center (ALC) serves AISD middle and high school students who have been removed from their regular campuses for discipline offenses committed. During their placement at the ALC, students learn how to improve their academic skills, and receive behavioral instruction and other assistance as needed. During 1997-98, there were 1,504 student removals to the ALC. SDFSC funds provided support for some staff salaries and benefits, consultant fees, employee travel and registration, and special program support. Total SDFSC funds allocated to the ALC in 1997-98 from the regular Title IV entitlement, not including the two special programs to be described below (SUPER I, Positive Families), were $98,253, of which $53,493 were spent.

### Substance Use Prevention Education and Resources (SUPER I)

1997-98 allocation: $64,460; 1997-98 monies spent: $24,170; Students served: 356; Families served: 356; Cost per participant (712 students and family members) served: $33.95

***Program Overview***

Substance Use Prevention Education and Resources, known as the district's SUPER I program, is a school-based middle- and high-school curriculum program which campuses are required to offer as a positive alternative to mandatory, long-term removals of students who have committed alcohol or drug-related offenses for the first time (excludes offenses involving the sale or distribution of controlled substances). The Metropolitan Atlanta Council on Alcohol and Drugs (MACAD) developed the SUPER I program. With corporate assistance from Motorola, Inc. and in partnership with Lifeworks, formerly known as Pathways Community Counseling (a local non-profit agency), SUPER I continued in its second year serving students from all of AISD's middle schools and high schools. Lifeworks provided some of the facilitators for SUPER I sessions.

The programmatic goals for SUPER I are as follows:

- stopping short- and long-term substance abuse among the targeted population;
- improving family communication skills; and,
- promoting family involvement in support services.

The primary incentive for participation in SUPER I is an abbreviated term of two weeks removal, rather than the average of six weeks, at the ALC. If the student and his or her parents (or other significant adult) complete the voluntary, eight-hour, four-session program, then arrangements may be made for the student to be allowed to return to the home school. This allows the student to return to their home schools and prevents the student from falling behind on their course credits earned.

AISD SDFSC funds were used primarily for the following:

- pay for facilitators (sessions occurred in the evening after school hours);
- consultants and training;
- program materials; and,
- general program support (e.g., supplies, reproduction, snacks for parents and students).

Motorola, Inc.'s financial contribution to SUPER I was used to fund stipends for Lifeworks' facilitators. Based on fiscal calendar year (January to December) 1998, Motorola, Inc.'s support of Lifeworks totals $24,574.

***Evaluation Method***

The evaluation focused on the impact of SUPER I in reducing student repeaters to the ALC. A database of all referred students was maintained at the ALC as the basis for short-term and long-term tracking of student progress. GENESYS provided basic demographic and academic information from district databases. Other data were obtained through surveys from SUPER I session facilitators, conducted mid-year and end-of-year. Feedback was obtained from these individuals for ongoing problem identification and program improvement. Regular meetings and an end-of-year survey of transition facilitator staff also provided useful information on how students were transitioned from the ALC back to their home campuses. A student follow-up survey was administered by the transition facilitators during the spring semester to students three weeks following their participation in SUPER I. Finally, program management staff members were interviewed for their opinions of program progress during the school year.

Students and Families Served

There were 1,504 removals to the ALC during 1997-98 for all student discipline offenses. This number represents 1,294 students, some of whom were removed to the ALC more than once. Of the 1,504 removals, 485 (32.25%) were for substance offenses relating to tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs. Of this number, a total of 356 students (125 middle school students, 231 high school students) entered the SUPER I program during the 1997-98 school year. Since the SUPER I program required that both a student and parent attend sessions, approximately 712 family members (students and their parents) had the opportunity to be served. Illicit drugs or controlled substances, such as marijuana, were the most common substances (87.84%) for which SUPER I participants had been referred to the ALC. Appendix D provides some summary characteristics of SUPER I students served during 1997-98.

Compared with 1996-97, which was the first year of the SUPER I pilot program, the number of SUPER I participants increased from 224 students to 356, a 58.9% increase (see Tables 25 and 26). However, during 1996-97, high school students were not eligible to participate in SUPER I until the spring 1997 semester. During the entire 1997-98 school year, all middle and high schools could send students to the SUPER I program. Therefore, there were more opportunities for schools to send more students to participate in SUPER I in its second year.

Approximately 68% of students enrolled in SUPER I completed the program successfully, resulting in shortened stays at the ALC. Comparing 1997-98 to 1996-97, the overall program completion rate was higher in 1996-97 (78.57%) than in 1997-98 (67.98%). The completion rates for high school participants were higher than for middle school participants during both years. Based only on the number of student completers during 1997-98 (n=242), at least 242 other family members were served by the program.

Table 25: SUPER I Program, Student Completers and Non-completers, 1997-98

| SUPER I 1997-98 | Middle School | | High School | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % of Total | Number | % of Total | Number | % of Total |
| **Completers** | 74 | 20.79% | 168 | 47.19% | 242 | 67.98% |
| **Non-completers** | 51 | 14.32% | 63 | 17.69% | 114 | 32.02% |
| **Total** | 125 | 35.11% | 231 | 64.89% | 356 | 100.0% |

*Source: 1997-98 ALC data files*

Table 26: SUPER I Program, Student Completers and Non-Completers, 1996-97

| SUPER I 1996-97 | Middle School | | High School | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % of Total | Number | % of Total | Number | % of Total |
| **Completers** | 87 | 39.01% | 89 | 39.73% | 176 | 78.57% |
| **Non-completers** | 31 | 13.83% | 17 | 7.59% | 48 | 21.43% |
| **Total** | 118 | 52.67% | 106 | 47.32% | 224 | 100.0% |

*Source: 1996-97 ALC Year End Report*

Measures and Perceptions of Program Effectiveness

One indicator of program effectiveness is to examine the level of student repeat removals to the ALC following SUPER I participation. As shown in Table 27, of all 356 SUPER I participants during 1997-98, a total of 35 (9.83%) later returned to the ALC for all discipline offenses, including drug or alcohol offenses. For the purposes of this discussion, a "repeater" is a student who returns to the ALC. A "recidivist" is a student who returns to the ALC for drug or alcohol offenses. Among the same 35 who returned to the ALC, 18 were referred for repeat drug or alcohol offenses, which yields a recidivism rate of 5.06% among all 1997-98 SUPER I participants. If only students that completed SUPER I are examined ("completers"), then a total of 20 students returned to the ALC for all discipline offenses, yielding a repeater rate of 5.62% among all completers. However, only eight students who had completed SUPER I returned to the ALC for drug or alcohol offenses, yielding a recidivism rate of 3.31% among all program completers.

Some comparisons can be made between SUPER I participants who returned to the ALC during 1996-97 and during 1997-98. For instance, comparing data in Tables 27 and 28, there were fewer SUPER I participants who returned to the ALC for all offenses during 1997-98 (35) than in 1996-97 (40). Thus, a lower repeater rate was achieved during 1997-98 among SUPER I participants for all offenses, even though the total number of students in SUPER I increased since 1996-97. However, compared to 1996-97, the 1997-98 recidivism rates for SUPER I students who had repeat drug or alcohol offenses were higher for all program participants (5.06%) and for program completers (3.31%).

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Table 27: ALC Repeaters Among SUPER I Participants, 1997-98

| SUPER I 1997-98 | Middle School | High School | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Repeaters | | | |
| *Completers* | 4 | 16 | 20 |
| *Non-completers* | 9 | 6 | 15 |
| *Total* | 13 | 22 | 35 |
| Overall Repeater Rate | | | 9.83% |
| Completers Repeater Rate | | | 8.26% |
| Drug/Alcohol Recidivists | | | |
| *Completers* | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| *Non-completers* | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| *Total* | 7 | 11 | 18 |
| Overall Recidivism Rate | | | 5.06% |
| Completers Recidivism Rate | | | 3.31% |

*Source: ALC data files*

Table 28: ALC Repeaters Among SUPER I Participants, 1996-97

| SUPER I 1996-97 | Middle School | High School | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Repeaters | | | |
| *Completers* | 20 | 9 | 29 |
| *Non-completers* | 9 | 2 | 11 |
| *Total* | 29 | 11 | 40 |
| Overall Repeater Rate | | | 17.86% |
| Completers Repeater Rate | | | 16.48% |
| Drug/Alcohol Recidivists | | | |
| *Completers* | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| *Non-completers* | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| *Total* | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Overall Recidivism Rate | | | 2.68% |
| Completers Recidivism Rate | | | 1.70% |

*Source: ALC data files*

Student Follow-up Survey

During the spring semester of 1998, transition facilitators were asked to follow up with students who had participated in the SUPER I program as of February 1998 by administering an anonymous survey for them to return to the Office of Program Evaluation. The purpose was to obtain a measure of program effectiveness from the students' perspectives. Data reported in this section do not represent all SUPER I participants during the 1997-1998 school year, nor do they represent all SUPER I participants since February 1998. Therefore, findings presented here should be interpreted with caution. Additionally, this survey was administered within three weeks of the students' return to their home campus from the ALC and SUPER I. Thus, data reported here reflect short-term impact only. Table 29 provides gender and grade-level information on participants.



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Table 29: Gender and Grade-Level of SUPER I Follow-up Survey Respondents, 1997-98

| SUPER I Gender | Grade Level | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 6th | 7th | 8th | 9th | 10th | 11th | 12th | No Response | Total |
| **Males** | 1 | 3 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 3 | **38** |
| **Females** | 0 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | **16** |
| **No Response** | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | **11** |
| **Total** | **2** | **11** | **18** | **12** | **7** | **3** | **3** | **9** | **65** |

*Source: Student follow-up survey*

Students responded to a series of questions about whether the SUPER I program had an impact on the following:

- Improving their ability to talk to their parents or guardian, other family members, teachers, and peers;
- Learning new information about the dangers of drug/alcohol use; and,
- Resisting using drugs or alcohol since returning to their regular campus.

Results from the survey are summarized in Figures 31 and 32. Due to participation in SUPER I, the majority of student respondents (65%) agreed that they had improved their ability to talk with their parents. Results were more mixed for improving communication with other individuals. For example, 38% of respondents agreed that SUPER I improved their ability to talk to other family members, while 25% disagreed, and 37% were not sure. When asked about improved communication with peers, 45% agreed that SUPER I had helped, 33% disagreed, and 22% were not sure. Finally, while 30% agreed that participating in SUPER I improved their ability to talk to their teachers, 42% disagreed, and 28% were not sure. Future SUPER I sessions may need to increase focus on these areas.

The majority of survey respondents (80%) agreed that they had learned new information about the dangers of drugs and alcohol from SUPER I. Additionally, 55% agreed that learning about the dangers of drugs and alcohol had prevented them from using substances again since returning to their regular campus.

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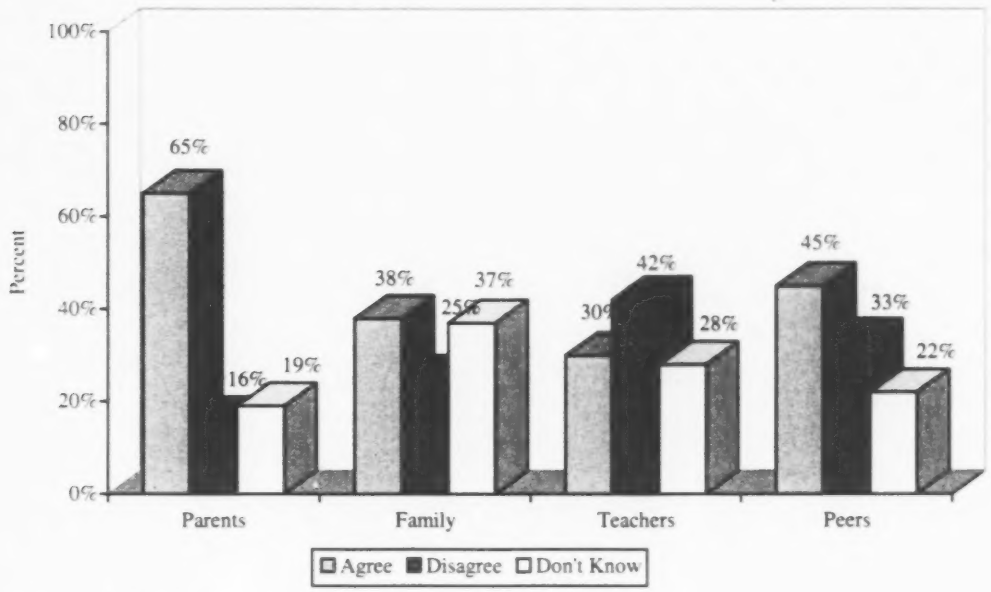
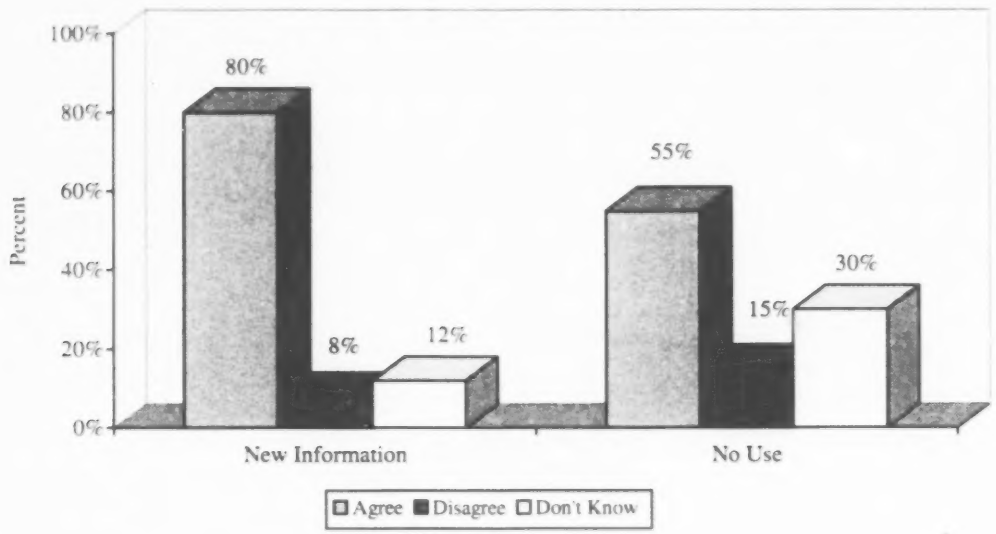
Figure 31: Percentage of SUPER I Students Indicating Improved Communication Skills




*Source: Student follow-up survey*

Figure 32: Percentage of SUPER I Students Indicating Gains in Information on the Dangers of Drugs and in the Ability to Resist Using Drugs




*Source: Student follow-up survey*

SUPER I Program Facilitator Survey

A program facilitator survey was administered to all facilitators of the SUPER I program at the end of each semester. On the survey, facilitators rated the effectiveness of SUPER I in deterring student alcohol and drug use and improving family communication, commented on positive experiences they had with the program, and made recommendations for improvements to the program.

Nine facilitators who taught the SUPER I program were surveyed, and of these, seven returned surveys in the fall, and six returned surveys in the spring. Half of the respondents felt the program was effective in deterring students from using substances again. However, while the program was thought to be effective in the short-term, any long-term impact on substance use would be difficult to discern. Respondents explained the difficulty in achieving long-term impact in two ways: more SUPER I sessions are needed to have a more potent effect, and students lack a clear understanding about the implications of drug use.

The facilitators were a little more optimistic about the program's ability to improve family communication. The majority (75%) of respondents felt the program was effective in this area since SUPER I activities coaxed parents and students to share ideas and feelings they most likely had never shared prior to class participation.

Respondents made the following recommendations for improving SUPER I:

- Provide materials in Spanish for families with limited English skills;
- Allow more flexibility in the curriculum;
- Reduce the amount of statistical/factual information during the first session;
- Provide more time for discussion among families; and,
- In order to increase continuity, encourage the same parent/guardian to attend all four sessions.

Transition Facilitator Surveys

The transition facilitators at each secondary campus are responsible for assisting students in the transition between the ALC and their home campus. Transition facilitators work with students, parents and campus staff to ensure continuous communication, especially on attendance and academic records, assigned schoolwork, discipline hearing information, alternative program enrollment procedures, and student's reintegration into the regular campus program.

At the end of the spring 1998 semester, the district's transition facilitators were surveyed about their experiences during the school year. Of the 25 surveys sent to transition facilitators, 14 (56%) were returned. Of these, one survey was returned uncompleted because the position at that campus had not been filled permanently. Therefore, the analysis of survey results was based on 13 staff respondents (52%), eight from middle schools, and five from high schools. Most respondents (nine) were professional staff (counselors or teachers), three had classified positions, and one was an administrator. The average number of years working in the district reported was 7.46 years (range one to 15 years). Half of the respondents indicated they had been appointed to the transition facilitator position by their principal.

Respondents reported on their interactions with students who transitioned to and from the ALC during 1997-98. The average number of students with whom the transition facilitators worked was 31 (ranging from five to 80 students), and the average number of contacts per

student was 4.6 (ranging from one to 25 contacts). When asked about *problems that students faced* upon their return to campus from the ALC, the most common problems reported were discipline, staff relationships, emotional or personal problems, and academic problems. When asked what percentage of students experienced more than one of these problems, the average response was 53% of students (range 2% to 100%). Respondents indicated that they assisted students with these problems by talking with the students, and talking with teachers, parents, administrators, and/or an external agency.

Transition facilitators also were asked to describe campus staff perceptions about their work with students. When asked about campus *staff awareness* of the transition facilitator's activities, 38% of respondents indicated that few staff members were aware, while 31% responded that about half were aware, and another 31% indicated that most staff were aware. When asked how *supportive* campus staff members were of the transition facilitators, the majority of respondents indicated that both campus administration (77%) and classified staff (62%) were very supportive. However, only 23% indicated that their campus teaching staff was very supportive; 54% responded that teaching staff was only moderately supportive. Finally, transition facilitators were asked to report whether their campus staff perceived any *change in students* returning from the ALC. Of the respondents, 31% said they were not sure how campus staff perceived these students. However, 46% reported that most staff did not perceive any academic or behavioral changes in students returning from the ALC since they had left their campus. Only 23% of respondents thought that most staff did perceive improvements in students that returned from the ALC.

When asked about their interactions with students involved in the *SUPER I program*, 11 transition facilitators had had contact with students in SUPER I. When transition facilitators were asked to give their opinion on whether the program would have a lasting positive effect on students and parents, most gave neutral or no opinion responses. That is, when asked whether SUPER I would have a lasting positive impact on students' behaviors, six (55%) gave neutral or no opinion responses, three (27%) agreed, two (18%) disagreed, and two did not respond. When asked whether SUPER I had had a positive impact on parents, nine (82%) gave neutral or no opinion responses, two (18%) agreed, and two did not respond.

When asked to describe their *successes*, several facilitators mentioned the opportunity to work with and get to know students, to help build their self-esteem, to help them return to campus smoothly, and to see the positive results of their time and effort. When asked about *difficulties or disappointments*, some facilitators mentioned the lack of time to work with students (given that this was work assigned in addition to their regular position); difficulty with some information communication (e.g., ALC enrollment or attendance); and, lack of administrative or teacher support at their campus.

Respondents provided some *suggestions* for improving the transition facilitator role:

- More time should be allotted for transition facilitator activities (e.g., allow a substitute to fill in as needed; make the transition facilitator role a half- or full-time position);
- Improve communication between the ALC and the home school campuses; improve communication between transition facilitators and their campus administration;
- More training and information provided to transition facilitators; and,
- More contact with students and parents during the transition period.

Program Management Staff Interviews

In an end-of-year interview, program management staff discussed program changes, positive outcomes, difficulties, and future plans. At the beginning of the 1997-98 school year, all middle and high school campuses were able to refer students to the SUPER I program. In addition, numerous alternative removal periods were offered to campuses, from the minimum two-day removal, to two-week removal, to the full six-week removal. Although not encouraged, some principals referred their students for participation in SUPER I without enrolling them in the ALC. All of the shorter removal periods meant that students could return to their regular campuses quickly, and thus, keep up with their academic course credit progress. Steps were taken to make sure all secondary campuses were sent information packets on ALC programs offered (e.g., SUPER I, Positive Families). Also, campuses were given campus "target shares" of the total number of students who could be enrolled at the ALC at any one time. The purpose of this was to ensure that total ALC enrollment could be kept at or below the maximum capacity of 300 students. Having a variety of enrollment and removal options helped keep the student capacity at ALC manageable. The end result is that all secondary campuses used these short-term alternative programs successfully.

SUPER I management staff indicated that more cycles and sessions of SUPER I were offered this school year to accommodate the greater number of student-family referrals (since all secondary schools were using the program). Regarding student program completion rates, staff members were pleased with the high completion rate among high school participants, but were somewhat disappointed with the lower completion rate among middle school participants. Regarding student recidivism, staff members are pleased that few students ever return to the ALC after having participated in SUPER I. Regarding program management and session facilitation, staff noted that a lot of coordination was necessary to make the program run smoothly (e.g., schedule facilitators, provide materials, etc.). However, since there was only a small group of facilitators teaching all of the cycles (both SUPER I and Positive Families), there was some strain in terms of the workload on individual facilitators.

In order to address some of these issues, program staff would like to have more facilitators trained and available for the next school year. Staff also want to offer SUPER I sessions in the late afternoon, in addition to the sessions already offered in the evening, to make the program more convenient for students, families and staff. Furthermore, program staff would like to see more involvement of the district's visiting teacher staff, and more frequent and clearer communication with campuses on program procedures and student information records. An essential element of inter-campus communication is the transition facilitator. The program management would like to see transition facilitators at the secondary campuses have more involvement in effective transitioning of students from the ALC to the home campus. This may involve a more careful selection of individuals to fill the transition facilitator positions, more training for the transition facilitators on their roles and responsibilities, and more time set aside for their activities.

Suggestions for evaluation included continued long-term follow up of students and family members who had participated in the program.

**Positive Families Pilot Project**

1997-98 allocation: $81,299; 1997-98 monies spent: $35,458; Students served: 56; Families served: 56; Cost per participant (112 students and family members) served: $316.59

***Program Overview***

Positive Families is a school-based middle- and high-school curriculum pilot program, developed by AISD staff, which is offered in AISD as a positive alternative to long-term removals of students who have committed disciplinary offenses categorized as persistent misbehavior. Positive Families was offered in AISD for the first time during the 1997-98 school year. The campus principal has the discretion of offering students Positive Families at the time of removal. Procedures for program operation are somewhat similar to the SUPER I program described earlier. The primary incentive for participation is an abbreviated term of two weeks removal from the home campus, as opposed to the standard six weeks, at the district's Alternative Learning Center (ALC). The student and a parent (or other significant adult) must complete the voluntary, eight-hour, four-session program held at the ALC in order for arrangements to be made for the student to be allowed to return to the home campus. This allows the student to return to their home schools and prevents students from falling behind on course credits earned.

With the intention of providing families new ways to approach daily conflicts, the programmatic goals for Positive Families are as follows:

- improving communication skills with other individuals, especially family members;
- improving anger-management strategies;
- learning positive conflict resolution methods; and,
- developing effective problem solving skills.

These goals also provided the basis for four class session topics.

SDFSC funds were used primarily for the following program components, many of which involved curriculum development and facilitator training:

- training of facilitators (materials, pay for instructor, etc.),
- extra-duty pay for facilitators (sessions occurred during the evening),
- stipends for curriculum writing,
- program materials, and,
- general program support (e.g., supplies, reproduction).

***Evaluation Method***

The Positive Families program was piloted during 1997-98. Therefore, the evaluation incorporated both formative and summative components. Changes were made during the school year in terms of some of the class materials, such as refining lesson activities. Regarding program outcomes, the focus was on reducing discipline referrals for persistent misbehavior, especially student repeaters to the ALC. A database of all referred students was maintained at the ALC as the basis for short-term and long-term tracking of student progress. In addition, other materials collected for analysis included a student follow-up survey of those students who had completed Positive Families and returned to their regular campus. Based on several meetings and an end-of-year survey of transition facilitator staff from the secondary campuses, useful

information was gathered on how students were transitioned from the ALC back to their regular campuses. Finally, the program management staff members were interviewed for their opinions of program progress during the school year.

Students and Families Served

There were 1,504 removals to the ALC during 1997-98 for all student discipline offenses. This number represents 1,294 students, some of whom were removed to the ALC more than once. Table 30 indicates the Positive Families program completion rate for middle school, high school, and all students who participated during 1997-98. Demographic information on these Positive Families participants is presented in Appendix D. As shown in Table 30, the completion rates were low at the middle and high school levels (17.86%) and overall (35.71%). However, this may be a result of the fact that the program's participation regulations and procedures were not clear until midway through the school year. Students and campus administration did not understand that a reduced ALC removal was contingent upon mandatory program completion.

Table 30: Positive Families Program, Student Completers and Non-completers, 1997-98

| Positive Families 1997-98 | Middle School | | High School | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % of Total | Number | % of Total | Number | % of Total |
| **Completers** | 10 | 17.86% | 10 | 17.86% | 20 | 35.71% |
| **Non-completers** | 23 | 41.07% | 13 | 23.21% | 36 | 64.29% |
| **Total** | 33 | 58.93% | 23 | 41.07% | 56 | 100% |

*Source: 1997-98 ALC data files*

Measures and Perceptions of Program Effectiveness

Table 31 shows the numbers of Positive Families participants who returned to the ALC during 1997-98 for any discipline offenses. Of the 33 middle school Positive Families participants, 10 returned to the ALC during 1997-98 for discipline offenses. Of these 10 repeaters, four were program completers. Of the 23 high school program participants, only one (a non-completer) returned to the ALC for discipline offenses. Therefore, the overall rate of recidivism for all Positive Families participants is 19.64%. Examining only students who completed the program (n=20), the recidivism rate was about the same at 20%.

Table 31: ALC Repeaters Among Positive Families Participants, 1997-98

| Positive Families 1997-98 | Middle School | High School | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Repeaters** | | | |
| *Completers* | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| *Non-completers* | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| *Total* | 10 | 1 | 11 |
| **Overall Recidivism Rate** | | | 19.64% |
| **Completers Recidivism Rate** | | | 20.00% |

*Source: ALC data files*

Student Follow-up Survey

As with SUPER I, transition facilitators at the secondary campuses were asked to follow up with students who had participated in the Positive Families program since February 1998. The purpose of this was to obtain an additional measure of program effectiveness from the students' perspectives. Enrollment in Positive Families was relatively low compared to SUPER I. Of the 22 students enrolled in Positive Families since February 1998, only six had completed the course and only five returned a student follow-up survey. Therefore, data were insufficient to draw conclusions as to the effectiveness of the program from the students' perspectives. As the program continues in 1998-99, it is expected that more data will be available since the program will have been in operation longer, and therefore, will have had more participants.

Transition Facilitator Survey

At the end of the 1998 spring semester, the secondary campuses' transition facilitators were surveyed about their activities in helping students return to the home campus from the ALC. A general description of the survey results can be found in the transition facilitator survey section of the SUPER I program in this report. Results specific to Positive Families are presented here. When asked about their interactions with students involved in the Positive Families program, seven transition facilitators reported having had contact with students in this program. When transition facilitators were asked to give their opinion on whether the program would have a lasting positive effect on students and parents, most gave "neutral" or "no opinion" responses. Transition facilitators were asked about the impact of Positive Families on students and parents. Most (75%) selected "neutral" or "no opinion", one (12.5%) disagreed, one (12.5%) agreed, and five did not respond. When asked about the impact on parents, five (71%) selected "neutral" or "no opinion", two (29%) agreed, and six did not respond.

Program Management Staff Interview

An end-of-year interview with program staff covered changes, positive outcomes, difficulties, and future goals in the first year of operation for the Positive Families program. As with SUPER I, the Positive Families program was offered through the ALC to all secondary campuses during 1997-98. Positive Families was created to address family communication issues, and, according to program staff, this made it a well-received program by parents, students and staff. Staff reported that campuses used a variety of removal options. However, at the beginning of the school year, there was some confusion about how and when students should be offered Positive Families. Furthermore, there was a lack of clarity on the fact that a student and parent had to complete the Positive Families sessions in order to be given the shortened removal period. Finally, there was not a clear connection between a specific type of discipline referral and the appropriateness of when to offer Positive Families to a student. This confusion probably contributed somewhat to the low program completion rate, since students, families and schools were not always clear on the requirement of program completion before returning to the regular campus. Program staff felt that continued communication with campus administration helped clear up some of these procedural matters.

Next year, as with SUPER I, program staff want to offer more sessions of Positive Families (including an afternoon session), have more session facilitators trained and available,

and continue to improve communication channels between the ALC and the campuses. An essential element of this inter-campus communication is the transition facilitator. The program management would like to see transition facilitators at the secondary campuses have more involvement in effective transitioning of students from the ALC to the home campus. This may involve a more careful selection of individuals to fill the transition facilitator positions, more training for the transition facilitators on their roles and responsibilities, and more time set aside for their activities.

Finally, program management would like to see a more preventive model of improving family communication offered at all school grade levels. A first step at addressing this early prevention model was tested with the Families Communicate Pilot Project, which was evaluated and will continue to be tested in the 1998-99 school year (see Doolittle, 1998).

**SUMMER SUCCESS PROGRAM**

1997-98 allocation: $17,343; 1997-98 monies spent: $9,417; Students served: 141; Cost per student served: $66.78

This was the second year of operation for the Summer Success program in Austin, a program which helps at-risk students focus on work readiness skills, career exploration, successful transition into high school, and academic reading skills. In addition to AISD SDFSC monies, the summer program during 1998 also received funding from the following sources: Capital Area Workforce Development Board ($239,600 federal grant to Communities in Schools), City of Austin ($97,600), other Austin ISD monies ($37,586), and Rotary Clubs of Austin and Saltillo, Mexico ($2,000). The program targets 14-15 year-old students in the district who have been identified as at risk of not graduating. Some of the criteria used to identify and select students as candidates for participation in this program include the following:

- students who have failed the eighth grade (acàdemic variable);
- students at risk of dropping out of ninth grade (academic variable); and,
- students with other personal or behavioral risk factors (e.g., pregnancy or parenting; serious and persistent disciplinary offenses).

During the summer of 1998, the Summer Success program served approximately 141 students. Appendix D shows some characteristics of 1998 student participants in the program.

The program has the following major components:

- Academics – Students can attain a half-credit reading elective in AISD by completing a course within the district's DELTA program.
- Community Service Learning – Students complete a community service learning project or several related projects in one of many career pathways (that match AISD-recommended pathways), such as business, agriculture-environment, human services, applied technology, high technology. Teamwork, problem solving, and decision making are primary working methods, with the goal of making learning relevant and exciting to students.
- Work Readiness – Students have opportunities to write a resume, participate in mock job interviews, fill out job application forms, and assess themselves on employability skills. The students learn to identify their strengths and prepare themselves for the types of activities that are necessary to enter the working world.
- Career Exploration – Students have the opportunity to investigate different careers and jobs. They take a job interests survey and explore different career pathways in which they are interested. Career exploration involves learning about education requirements for specific fields or professions, recommended extra-curricular activities, and hearing about careers from invited speakers. In addition, job shadowing or site visits are available. Some preliminary matching of student job interests to job survey results is done so those students can take back a plan to their home school counselors.
- Transition to High School – Students are assisted by ensuring they have all the necessary information and personal contacts at the high school they will attend in the fall. Follow up on students is done to make sure they have all personal and academic records ready for school, any necessary transfer forms, and a list of school orientation events. If possible, a

few home visits are conducted with some students and families. The goal is to stress the importance of finishing school.

- Life Skills - Once a week, life skills groups, led by the program's social work staff, met to discuss various topics of interest and relevance to students. For instance, some of the following issues were discussed: making healthy choices regarding personal or sexual relationships with others; substance abuse prevention; conflict management and relationships with others.

For the next school year, students who participated in Summer Success will be followed through evaluation of academic (e.g., GPA, TAAS, retention, graduation) and other variables available in the district's database (e.g., attendance, discipline).

# CURRICULUM AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

## PREKINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12 CURRICULUM SUPPLEMENT

1997-98 allocation: $182,875; 1997-98 monies spent: $122,880

### Objectives

The objectives of the SDFSC-funded curriculum supplement are as follows:

- to continue to provide age-appropriate curriculum to students in grades prekindergarten through 12 covering the areas of drug and alcohol education and prevention;
- to assist campus staff in bringing SDFSC-related curriculum materials, programs, activities and other efforts to AISD campuses;
- to provide in-service training to teachers and counselors on how to make the best use of materials and consultants dealing with drug and alcohol prevention and education;
- to provide monies for registration fees so that administrators, counselors, and teachers for the SDFSC program can attend state and national conferences in order to stay current with drug and alcohol education and prevention programs and curricula; and,
- to create a more integrated prevention curriculum that will blend with other academic curricula being taught in the district.

### Campus Support

Some of these objectives are attained through campus-based programs (described earlier in this report). For instance, some campuses choose to spend their SDFSC campus allotment on the purchase of instructional or curriculum materials, or on staff training or conferences.

#### *SDFSC Instructional Coordinators*

At the district level, five instructional support staff members assist campuses in their SDFSC efforts. These instructional coordinators (representing different curriculum areas) assist schools in aligning the goals of the regular curriculum areas to the goals of the SDSFC programs on campuses. The goal here is to provide different perspectives and levels of involvement from all the core curriculum areas. The coordinators discussed their SDFSC-relevant roles and activities in a spring 1998 interview. All agreed that the greatest concentration of SDFSC curriculum and activities lies within the science and health curriculum area since there are many common goals and issues. The one science instructional coordinator acknowledged a greater compatibility between the shared components of science and the SDFSC program. The other coordinators, from the curriculum areas of language, mathematics and social studies, indicated that little time or emphasis was put on their involvement with SDFSC for several reasons. They indicated that no clear directives or goals were communicated to them from the district on taking a leading role in SDFSC, and few if any campus staff asked for their assistance or information on SDFSC matters. However, they felt that this would change in the coming year due to the realignment of the district's federally funded programs, such as SDFSC, within AISD's curriculum and instruction division.

All instructional coordinators commented on campus concerns about SDFSC issues. Several coordinators noted that some campuses struggle to find the most beneficial way to use the funds they receive through SDFSC. The coordinators added that campuses often do not use the SDFSC funds allotted to them. Better coordination and communication between central staff and campus staff is needed to ensure the efficient and effective spending of funds. In addition, the coordinators said that campuses should be encouraged to combine their resources with other campuses, perhaps those within their vertical teams. This would allow for more funding to be available to conduct a more coordinated project, for instance, one that focuses on transitioning between grade levels. The coordinators also suggested that campuses should align their campus SDFSC goals and activities with their campus improvement plan. The coordinators also noted that campuses would like to be given more suggestions for appropriate and effective SDFSC activities and instructional materials. For example, the coordinators and the campuses have expressed an interest in having a resource list for their campus planning. This resource list might include SDFSC-applicable instructional materials (and sources), available SDFSC-relevant training opportunities, recommended speakers, and suggested activities.

The instructional coordinators hoped to see the following in the coming school year:

- goal-setting and planning at the beginning of the school year, among SDFSC and curriculum staff, that emphasizes common SDFSC goals and curriculum goals;
- increased communication between them and campuses on SDFSC matters, and a "team effort" with SDFSC staff, including the area intervention specialists;
- opportunities to become familiar with the SDFSC prevention curriculum (D.A.V.E.), and ways to create a comprehensive (prekindergarten through grade 12) matrix of curriculum-based knowledge/skill goals that aligns each core curriculum area with the D.A.V.E. curriculum and with TEKS;
- more involvement of parents and parent training specialists from campuses;
- at the campus level, increased emphasis on aligning SDFSC goals and activities with campus improvement plans; and,
- better use of campus funds on SDFSC-appropriate activities and other expenditures.

***SDFSC Intervention Specialists***

The district's area intervention specialists have supported campuses in SDFSC and other activities. During the spring semester, the intervention specialists gave a presentation to district SDFSC staff on their job activities during 1997-98. Later they were interviewed by the SDFSC Evaluation Analyst on this and other topics. The five intervention specialists, one assigned to each of the district's areas, reported that they had various responsibilities in five domains:

- area schools – campus site visits, area meetings, student/parent intervention, TAAS;
- SDFSC – assistance to all AISD and private schools within AISD boundaries; communication on campus planning and evaluation;
- school safety and crisis management plans – development, monitoring, intervention, follow up;
- attendance – monitoring, drop-out recovery assistance, documentation; and,
- discipline – develop discipline management plans, attend court hearings, conduct mediation, problem solving, workshops/training.

The intervention specialists' education and training included a range of master's degrees in counseling or educational administration, and school district experience at various levels, including teacher, counselor, and administrator; a few had central administration experience as well. During the 1997-98 school year, they received various types of specific training that assisted them in their work, including: student assistance program, positive parenting practices, conflict resolution, team building and group facilitation, crisis management, national and state SDFSC/Title conferences, D.A.V.E., and campus improvement planning.

The intervention specialists often had campus contact with counselors, assistant principals, and teaching staff regarding one or more of these domains. One of their achievements during 1997-98 was establishing or updating a written crisis management plan and a campus crisis team at each AISD campus. Regarding their work with campuses on SDFSC, the intervention specialists expressed their concerns about the ways campuses spend their SDFSC funds. As with the instructional coordinators, they would like to see campuses have their campus goals and improvement plans in line with SDFSC goals, activities, and expenditures. They also expressed a need for providing more professional development or training opportunities to campuses on some of the topics and skills that they see as important to SDFSC, such as student risk and resiliency factors. Finally, they would like to continue improving communication and rapport with campus staff, in their efforts to assist campuses with overcoming any difficulties.

**Curriculum Integration**

There was a continuation of the effort to integrate drug-violence prevention curricula with the district's other core curricula during the 1997-98 school year. TEA's *Texas Prevention Curriculum Guide: Drug and Violence Education* (1997), or *DAVE*, along with the earlier *Education for Self-Responsibility II - ESRII* (1991), and the state's TEKS for each core curriculum area, provided the basis for updating information in several curriculum areas. SDFSC funds in 1997-98 for curriculum supported the development and implementation of the district's counseling and guidance curriculum, *Live This!* (1998).

***Guidance and Counseling Curriculum***

In an interview with the administrative supervisor for the district's guidance and counseling program, curriculum activities in this area that were funded by SDFSC were discussed. The district's guidance and counseling curriculum defines a prekindergarten to grade 12 curriculum organized in eight strands, with grade-level appropriate knowledge and skill expectations listed. These strands are as follows:

- self-knowledge and acceptance;
- interpersonal communication skills and diversity appreciation;
- responsible behavior;
- conflict resolution;
- decision making, problem solving;
- motivation to achieve;
- goal setting; and,
- career planning.

The updated guidance and counseling curriculum document, *Live This!* (1998), was completed and distributed to all district campuses. In addition, copies of all supporting

curriculum materials, such as *DAVE*, were provided to every campus. During the summer of 1998, all district counselors received training in how to plan for and deliver the revised curriculum at the campus level in the 1998-99 school year. Each campus counseling program will develop an annual program plan that outlines the campus' guidance and counseling priorities for each grade level in the components of guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning, and system support. These will be defined in terms of timeframe needed and expected student outcomes. Campus plans will be signed by the campus principal, submitted to the district's administrative supervisor for guidance and counseling, and assessed annually for progress. Monitoring the plans will help evaluate the usefulness of the curricula, and provide a benchmark for measuring each campus' progress toward achieving student competencies. In addition, information will be gathered from campus counselors during the school year on the usefulness of the *Live This!* and *DAVE* curricula and any suggestions for improvement. SDFSC evaluation will parallel the efforts of the guidance and counseling administrative team in tracking campus progress, and will help assess the usefulness of the *DAVE* curriculum.

***Science and Health Curriculum***

Efforts to incorporate the *DAVE* prevention curriculum in the district's core curriculum areas are being paralleled in science and health. In an interview with the district's administrative supervisor for science and health, curriculum plans and activities relevant to SDFSC were discussed. The district's current comprehensive (prekindergarten - grade 12) health curriculum document, *Making Healthy Choices* (1991, 1995), which references *ESRII*, is in the process of being updated and revised, and part of this process will be to align the district's science and health curriculum with *DAVE*. The goal for the district is to provide complementary and comprehensive (prekindergarten - grade 12) curricula to campuses that address district goals for science, health and SDFSC. Once curriculum revisions have been completed, each campus will be provided with updated curriculum resources and materials, including *DAVE* and other relevant materials. Immediate plans are to get copies of the *DAVE* curriculum distributed to all campuses during the 1998-99 school year for all campus staff to use. Staff training will accompany the distribution of materials.

The first step taken in this project during 1997-98 was obtaining feedback from all district science and health teaching staff on ways to update or modify *Making Healthy Choices* (*MHC*). A second step was the assembly of a focus group of AISD staff, including counselors and health teachers, during the summer of 1998 to examine where the *DAVE* curriculum complements the *MHC* curriculum. Third, during the 1997-98 school year, each campus contact for *MHC* (usually a science/health teacher or counselor) submitted a *MHC* implementation plan that described the method for student instruction, parent contact, and teacher training schedules to be followed in 1998-99. This implementation plan will be used annually to benchmark campus progress, and it will provide a way to detect teacher training needs. This campus implementation plan also will serve as an evaluation tool to collect information on how the SDFSC-related curriculum materials are being used at the campus level.

Ultimately, staff in the science and health curriculum area would like to have a curriculum framework document, similar to the one produced in guidance and counseling, that outlines levels of competencies in different skill/knowledge clusters, including SDFSC-related

competencies. The five general skill/knowledge clusters in the current *MHC* curriculum are as follows:

- developmentally-related emotional changes,
- corresponding physical changes,
- awareness (e.g., personal safety, media),
- decision making, and,
- staying healthy (e.g., communicable diseases).

The curriculum revision project will span several years, involving curriculum updates, dissemination of materials, teacher training, and implementation and evaluation of progress in student instruction and follow up. From an evaluation standpoint, each step of the process (i.e., curriculum revision, dissemination and usage; teacher training; student instruction and impact) will be assessed to determine whether district goals, science and health curriculum goals, and SDFSC goals are being met.



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## STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

1997-98 allocation: $8,600; 1997-98 monies spent: $4,912; Staff served: 38; Cost per staff served: $129.26

### History and Purpose

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a school-based program designed to identify and help students having difficulties that affect their ability to perform successfully in school. When a student is identified as potentially experiencing difficulties, a SAP core team works with the student to provide appropriate school-based assistance. If the student and family needs exceed the capability of campus resources, the SAP team helps the student find an appropriate referral source. Students are monitored to ensure they are progressing satisfactorily. Since SAP training began in 1992, approximately three-fourths of AISD campuses have had at least one person trained in the SAP process.

In 1997-98, SDFSC monies paid for SAP staff training, including payment of a consultant trainer, purchases of reading materials, and provision of supplies for training sessions. Monies also were used to pay for substitute teachers in order to allow school staff to attend the two-day training sessions. The three main objectives established for the SAP during the 1997-98 school year were:

- to provide training for school-based SAP teams who want to establish or strengthen SAPs on campuses;
- to assist the SAP trainer by expanding the evaluation of the SAP training by administering:
  1. a pre-training inventory prior to the first day of training which would summarize specific goals and needs of the trainees at each session; and,
  2. a post-training evaluation form at the end of the second session; and,
- to measure long-term impact of SAP by expanding the evaluation to include a follow up with attendees from the 1996-97 SAP training sessions.

### Description of the Training Attendees

Three training sessions (two days each) were scheduled during the spring, 1998 semester. However, due to low enrollment one training session was cancelled. The consultant hired to conduct the training sessions is a Licensed Practicing Counselor (LPC) and has conducted numerous SAP trainings. Each two-day training took place at AISD's Professional Development Academy and included training in the following areas:

- recognition of students who are having academic and/or personal difficulties;
- understanding of the concepts of resiliency and protective factors in students;
- identification of the legal issues concerned with conducting a SAP; and,
- description of the steps to develop or strengthen a campus SAP.

A total of 38 district staff attended the SAP training sessions. Of these, 19 (50%) were teachers, eight (21%) were counselors, four (11%) were intervention specialists, and two (5%) were Communities-in-Schools staff members. The remaining five (13%) participants included positions such as a school nurse, behavioral specialist, and parent training specialist. Of the 19 teachers who attended, 16% were special-education teachers. Of all staff who attended trainings, 39% worked in elementary schools, 26% worked in a high school, 24% worked in a middle

school, and 11% were central administration staff members that support the campuses (i.e., Intervention Specialists).

***January 29 and 30, 1998 Training Session***

Seven AISD staff members (five teachers, two counselors) attended the first training along with the co-chair of the SDFSC Advisory Council. To improve the evaluation of the SAP and the training process, a SDFSC Evaluation Associate attended the training as well as an observer. Campus staff attending represented one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Those from the elementary and middle schools already had a SAP in place at their school. Their primary reason for attending was to learn how they could improve their current programs. Those representing the high school did not have a campus SAP in place and were there to learn how to begin a campus SAP.

***April 15 and 16, 1998 Training Session***

The second training was attended by 31 AISD staff members, both campus and central administration support staff (e.g., behavioral specialists, parent training specialists, intervention specialists). The campus staff represented three elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools. The primary reason given for attending was to gain information that would help improve the current campus SAP.

**Methods of Evaluation**

Four methods of evaluation were used to assess SAP during 1997-98. They are described in the following section.

***One-Year Participant Follow-up***

The purpose of the one-year participant follow-up survey was to determine the level of progress achieved by participants since the 1996-97 SAP training sessions. Respondents were asked to report the following: activities begun or in progress; number of students served; reasons for referral; number of presentations made to other school staff; and comments on successes, difficulties, and ways to improve SAP and training. In 1996-97, 46 AISD staff members had attended SAP training. Of these, five were no longer employed in the district during the 1997-98 school year. Thus, the follow-up survey was sent to the remaining 41 staff members at the beginning of January 1998 with a request to complete and return by January 30, 1998. Due to an initially low response rate, two additional attempts were made to obtain completed surveys; however, only a 50% response rate was achieved. Thus, the following data are based upon a sample size of 21 of the original 41 staff members queried and, therefore, must be interpreted with caution.

As indicated below, most respondents had begun the following SAP-related activities:

- Assigned a leader to coordinate SAP activities (N=19, or 90%);
- Held regularly scheduled SAP team meetings (N=15, or 75%);
- Recruited and trained other faculty in SAP (N=13, or 65%);
- Set an agenda for developing/using SAP (N=15, or 75%);
- Had a principal or other campus level administrator regularly attending SAP meetings (N=12, or 60%);

- Informed teachers of SAP and its purpose (N=15, or 75%);
- Established a method of feedback to those making student referrals to SAP (N=14, or 70%); and,
- Identified internal and external resources for their SAP (N=13, or 65%).

Thirty-five percent or fewer had begun the remaining activities listed on the survey:

- Assigned roles to newly trained SAP faculty (N=7, or 35%);
- Informed students of SAP and its purpose (N=5, or 25%); and,
- Informed parents of SAP and its purpose (N=6, or 30%).

Fifteen (74%) responded that 16 or more students had been served since they attended the training. The most common reason for referral were poor academic performance (N=7, or 44%). Other reasons given included family/social issues (N=5, or 31%), misconduct (N=3, or 19%), and potential emotional disturbances such as depression (N=1, or 6%). Since the training, 15 (89%) indicated that they had conducted at least one training/presentation to campus staff that addressed SAP, substance use, or both.

***Pre-Training Inventory***

The pre-training inventory was designed to address needs and goals specific to the individuals attending each of the training sessions. These needs/goals were to reflect specific circumstances and characteristics of the school the attendees were representing. Having this information prior to the training would allow the trainer to tailor the program so as to meet the needs of each group. A complete list of attendees was not available in enough time to send out the pre-training inventory prior to the start of the first training, so it was administered on the first day of class. Due to this, the trainer was unable to adjust the program to the needs of the 1st group of trainees as adequately as she would have liked. However, this process proved to be very successful with the second training.

The majority of respondents from the 2nd group of trainees reported already having either a well-functioning SAP or a similar program at their school. Therefore, the focus of most attendees at the second training was adding new members and acquiring updated information. Knowing this prior to the onset of training allowed the trainer to spend more time on current issues concerning SAP (e.g., legal concerns) and less time on the step-by-step building process of a new SAP.

***Post-Training Evaluation***

The post-training evaluation form was designed to assess the effectiveness and success of the SAP training. The form was administered at the end of the second day for both SAP training sessions. The participants commented on the extent to which the training met their goals and prepared them to either begin a SAP or continue/expand a SAP at their school. Additionally, they recommended others who should be invited to attend the training, and rated the degree of difficulty expected in developing or continuing a SAP once they returned to their home campus. Finally, they made suggestions or recommendations for improving the training.

A total of 37 staff returned surveys. Of 25 respondents, 22 agreed that the pre-training inventory had helped prepare them for the training. Of 36 respondents, 31 felt that their expectations had been met by the training. When asked about the level of difficulty they foresaw

in developing or continuing the SAP at their school following the training, 37 responded. Of these, only five expected a great deal of difficulty; 26 felt there would be a moderate amount of difficulty, and six indicated there would be little or no difficulty. All attendees recommended that a variety of other campus staff should attend future SAP training sessions. Finally, due to participation in the training, 30 of 35 respondents agreed that they felt prepared to begin/assist with a SAP at their school.

Attendees made some of the following suggestions for improving training:

- Extend the training to three days;
- Allow more time for campuses to share ideas with others who have a functional SAP;
- Incorporate more activities/group interaction into the training process; and,
- Discuss issues relevant to campus type (i.e., elementary vs. secondary school issues).

All attendees reported that their next step in implementing or continuing their campus SAP is to meet with staff at their campuses to determine campus SAP guidelines, future SAP activities, and assign roles to current SAP members.

***Program Manager Interview***

During the 1997-98 school year, the program manager identified three program goals. First, training sessions were to begin earlier in the school year. The objective of this goal was to allow school SAP teams sufficient time during the remaining portion of the school year to implement on campus what they had learned in training. Due to the unexpected need to change trainers late in the fall semester, the two fall training sessions scheduled were canceled. SAP training did not begin until the spring semester. Therefore, the objective of this goal was not met. To address this issue during the 1998-99 school year, two or three training sessions will be scheduled in the fall and one or two in the early spring, leaving the remaining portion of the year for practicing skills and conducting structured follow-up sessions.

The second goal identified by the program manager was to incorporate a team-oriented approach in the training format. The objective of this goal was to allow staff members to learn and practice the skills obtained during training as a team, thus developing a stronger core team and, ultimately, a more organized SAP at their school. Groups from elementary, middle, and high schools were in attendance at both training sessions and were allowed time to develop a plan for either implementing or strengthening their campus SAP.

The final goal was to improve and expand the evaluation process. This was accomplished by including the one-year follow-up survey of SAP training participants, the pre-training inventory, and the post-training evaluation. Although there were some data collection difficulties, as noted previously, the objective of collecting useful information in these inventories and surveys was accomplished.

The program manager identified the following program goals for 1998-99:

- *Organize a system of structured follow-up sessions for the campus SAP teams* to meet with the SAP trainer, program manager, or SDFSC Intervention Specialists. This would allow campus teams to discuss difficulties and determine effective problem-solving strategies.
- *Look to outside resources*, such as the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA), for provision of training personnel. TCADA has received a federal grant allowing funding of programs such as SAP at no cost to the school district. Having TCADA

personnel conduct the original, district-wide training would allow SDFSC staff to work more directly with the campuses.

- *Increase participation by campus administrative staff* (i.e., principals and/or assistant principals). In order to effect continued support of the SAP in a school, administrative staff who give permission to attend trainings must believe in its value. Attending the training will allow campus administration personnel to remain informed as well as become educated about the SAP model and its impact on students.
- *Increase awareness of the program through the development of a district SAP policy*. This would inform both parents and area superintendents of the purposes of the program, as well as actions taken as a result of student referral to the program.
- *Acquire additional funds for substitutes or stipends* in order to make the training more accessible to campus staff.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

All of the stated objectives for the 1997-98 SAP were met. However, a few minor problems occurred during the school year. While resulting in some slight setbacks in program implementation, these problems provided the program manager and SAP trainer with an opportunity to further develop and expand the scope of the SAP. For instance, the scheduling of training sessions for the 1998-99 school year will be designed so as to provide adequate time during the year for the SAP trainer and/or program manager to conduct campus-based follow-up sessions. Additionally, outside sources of funding will be sought in order to contract with personnel to teach the district-wide training sessions. This will allow the SAP trainer and program manager more time for the planned, campus-based follow-up sessions.

The scheduling of training sessions earlier in the school year also will allow the evaluation staff the ability to administer the SAP follow-up survey at the end of the same school year in which the training occurred. During 1997-98, the one-year follow-up survey was administered to staff who attended the SAP training during the *previous* school year. A year time span may have allowed campuses to attain some progress in their SAP. However, half of the previous year's trainees did not respond to the survey, and so interpretation of survey results may be limited. Since future training sessions will be held predominantly during the fall, there will be adequate time to allow implementation of SAP skills by the end of the school year when the follow-up survey will be administered. Additionally, it is more likely that most SAP training attendees will still be in the district, and thus, easier to track through the follow-up survey.

As the pre-training inventory and the post-training evaluation form proved to be useful tools for the SAP trainer, these will continue to be administered during the 1998-99 school year. Finally, more effort will also be made to recruit campus administrative staff (i.e., principals, assistant principals) to attend the 1998-99 training sessions.

## SUPPORT STAFF AND SERVICES

### MANAGEMENT

1997-98 allocation: $149,960; 1997-98 monies spent: $119,192

**SDFSC Program Facilitator**

A portion of the SDFSC program facilitator's salary was paid from SDFSC monies. The facilitator has the following responsibilities:

- coordinate meetings of the district's SDFSC Advisory Council and SDFSC Planning Committee;
- monitor and assist AISD campuses in the planning and implementation of campus programs and activities funded through the SDFSC grant;
- assist campuses with identification of SDSFC-appropriate activities;
- work with district program staff in preparing proposals and budgets; and,
- coordinate with appropriate state and local drug and alcohol abuse, health, and law enforcement agencies.

**Budget Control Specialist**

A portion of the budget control specialist's salary was paid from SDFSC monies. The budget control specialist manages the accounting procedures associated with SDFSC monies and helps provide detailed information on expenditures for each SDFSC program.

**Evaluation Staff**

The entire salary of an evaluation analyst and a portion of the salary of an evaluation associate were paid from SDFSC monies. These individuals provide evaluation of all SDFSC-funded programs and activities, including the following activities:

- district-wide surveys, other data collection, and analysis;
- individual SDFSC program data collection;
- report writing and presentations (e.g., annual TEA evaluation report, annual AISD SDFSC program evaluation report).

### CAMPUS SUPPORT

1997-98 allocation: $326,726; 1997-98 monies spent: $298,396

**Intervention Specialists**

The salaries of five intervention specialists were paid from SDFSC monies. Each of these individuals was assigned to one of the district's five school organizational areas. They are responsible for being the contacts for all schools within those areas, and to provide assistance to campuses in the following ways: crisis management, attendance, discipline, SDFSC program planning, site visits, TAAS, intervention, mediation, etc. (See earlier description of intervention specialists in curriculum supplement – campus support.).

**Instructional Coordinators**

A portion of five instructional coordinators' salaries was paid from SDFSC monies. Their duties through the SDFSC grant are to assist schools in aligning the goals of the regular curriculum areas to the goals of the SDSFC programs on campuses. (See earlier description of instructional coordinators in curriculum supplement – campus support.).

**Visiting Teacher**

A portion of the salary of one visiting teacher was paid using SDFSC monies. Visiting teachers are responsible for maintaining and improving communications and relationships between families and schools. They are involved in visiting families with children who are having difficulty academically, socially, or emotionally at school and/or in the home environment.

**Campus Security Officer**

A portion of the salary of one campus security officer, also known as the school resource officer, was provided through the SDFSC grant. Each secondary campus has one security officer, trained and certified as a law enforcement officer. The campus security officer is responsible for patrolling the campus, providing security to students and staff, and providing instructional support when requested. The officer is trained to work with students, staff and parents.

## SUMMARY

Although SDFSC monies are intended for use in serving all AISD students, analysis of budget data and participation information for campus-based programs and selected programs indicate that, in some cases, low percentages of students are actually being served. For example, specialized programs such as DARE, PAL, ROPES, SUPER I and Positive Families are targeted to serve smaller numbers of students in the district. Naturally, costs of operating these programs will be slightly higher on a per individual basis. Yet, these programs are specific in terms of desired SDFSC-related goals, objectives, and outcomes. However, the campus-based programs, designed to address a broader range of students, may not be adequately serving all students on campuses. Some schools used their monies to supplement established SDFSC programs, fund activities targeting only a few students, and conduct one-time events or presentations. The long-lasting impact of these efforts is unknown. The reasoning behind this may be in part due to the fact that campuses receive less money per individual than specialized programs. However, despite the amount of funding received, campus evaluation forms and budget records indicated that not every campus spent their campus allotment during the school year. The factors that may have contributed to campuses not being able to spend their allocations are unknown at this time. The end result, however, is that title monies not used in the district must be returned to TEA at the end of the grant year. The district needs to require campuses as well as established SDFSC programs to effectively and efficiently spend their budgeted funds in the service of AISD students, families, and staff members.

AISD does have important SDFSC programs that provide necessary services in the reduction of drug abuse and violent behaviors within the district. The variety of SDFSC program efforts in AISD, such as experiential learning (e.g., ROPES), peer-mentoring (e.g., PAL), family intervention (SUPER I, Positive Families), staff training (e.g., SAP) and campus-based prevention/education efforts seem to be effective means of addressing specific SDFSC goals. The challenge is to determine to what extent the programs can accomplish these goals, based upon available funding, and then to fill in the gaps with other initiatives. In addition, each of the SDFSC programs in the district will be charged with the task of complying with the U.S. Department of Education's Principles of Effectiveness (see Appendix C), and this will shape both the programs themselves (e.g., implementation) and how they are evaluated.

Some possible future directions for the most efficient and effective use of SDFSC funds must be explored. For example, in campus-based programs, collaboration among area vertical teams could be increased. To assist those particular campuses who, due to lower enrollments, receive only a small amount of funding, one possible solution would be for several campuses to pool their funds and work together to create a multi-campus initiative, which is both comprehensive and effective. Another direction that the district's SDFSC program must take is to improve tracking of progress on campus initiatives; this is one measure of effectiveness in the use of campus funds. Some campuses have continued to use the same types of programs despite not having any real measure of program effectiveness or knowledge of whether or not their campus goals had been met by the chosen activity. In light of the new federal mandate that districts receiving SDFSC funding comply with the Principles of Effectiveness, campuses will be held more accountable for their use of SDFSC monies during the 1998-99 school year. Plans are

already in place to create planning forms that ask campuses to develop a program based upon these Principles. The goal here is to have campuses define goals, objectives, activities, and measurable outcomes that are tied to their campus improvement plans and district SDFSC goals.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## CONCLUSIONS

Based upon results of the district surveys and the evaluation of the district's SDFSC programs, certain statements can be made. First, data from the surveys indicate that student drug use is present, but that campus staff awareness of usage is low. Additionally, while SDFSC has been in the district since 1984, staff members remain relatively unaware of current programs available to campuses. Data indicate this may be, in part, due to lack of staff training on substance use and violence prevention as well as SDFSC-related issues. Most current SDFSC programming efforts focus primarily on the students. The only SDFSC-funded program that includes staff development is the Student Assistance Program. A small number of campuses did use their funds to send staff to various types of professional development programs. However, the effectiveness and actual use of the knowledge gained from these programs is unknown at this time. Although student education should be the focus of AISD's SDFSC efforts, educated and informed teachers are necessary in order to implement a truly effective program that will have long-term impact.

District data also indicate other areas needing emphasis. While all current SDFSC programs fill a very important function in preventing drug abuse and violence, efforts must be made to increase the numbers of students served and to utilize programs which focus on specific needs of the individual campus as well as the district as a whole. In the past, the student drug survey was administered to a random sample of AISD elementary and secondary school students and then analyzed in summary format only. Individual campuses were not offered information specific to their own school needs. Given the federal mandate to utilize the Principles of Effectiveness (U.S. Department of Education, 1998) which require a needs assessment, perhaps a new tact should be taken during 1998-99 in the way the district data are summarized. If campuses are to utilize effective programming, they need information unique to their campuses. While one school may need more mentoring and tutoring via the PAL program, another may need special emphasis on gang-related violence prevention. Campuses should tailor their program to the needs and characteristics of the students and families they serve, but they need adequate information in order to do so. In addition to these programmatic needs, campuses must tie their SDFSC goals and activities to the goals in their campus improvement plans.

In addition to specific campus needs, survey data indicate overall district needs as well. Students at the fourth-grade level reported already being involved in drug use. Therefore, SDFSC programs should begin earlier than fourth grade, preferably at the onset of formal education. Additionally, specific areas show a need for increased education, prevention, and intervention. For example, among elementary students surveyed, the highest levels of reported usage of inhalants, alcohol, and tobacco were among sixth graders. Furthermore, only one-third of elementary students and one-fifth of secondary students viewed cigarettes/tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana as dangerous. Clearly, more education needs to be provided on the dangers of drug/alcohol/tobacco use, and current prevention and intervention program efforts need to be restructured and improved.

An effort to restructure the way in which campus-based initiatives are implemented and evaluated will be undertaken in the 1998-99 school year. This past year, campuses were allocated $1.00 per student for SDFSC programming. Many campuses with low enrollments found this to be insufficient in implementing a comprehensive and effective program. During 1998-99, the allotment per campus will be increased to at least $2.00. This increase will be beneficial if campuses are able to utilize the funds in a goal-oriented way that can be tracked for its impact on students. One method of achieving this goal is to attempt more collaborative efforts among campuses. Monies allocated for campus-based initiatives could be used in comprehensive efforts that involve multiple schools, at multiple grade levels. In this way, students would be following a predetermined, well-thought out, and long-term plan of prevention, rather than a series of disjointed and unrelated efforts. A continuous and sequential prevention program plan throughout a student's academic life needs to be followed in order to achieve long-term impact on attitudes and behavior.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information provided in this evaluation, and in light of changes planned for 1998-99, including implementing the new Principles of Effectiveness, the following recommendations are offered for consideration:

- Based on district student survey data, the district should increase efforts to provide education that focuses on the consequences and dangers of drug abuse. A special focus at the elementary level should be on cigarettes, alcohol, and inhalants. Secondary school efforts should focus on cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana, as well as drinking and driving.
- Based on district staff survey results, more education and training opportunities should be provided to staff and school administrators on substance abuse trends and SDFSC programs and related activities available to campuses.
- Based on program evaluations, campus-based initiatives should attempt to involve more parents and community members in their programs. Campus and district programs need to be more inclusive, specifically providing more outreach to parents, since parent involvement and education is an integral part of the goals of the SDFSC grant and of AISD.
- Additionally, more collaboration among campuses should occur to ensure implementation of a series of programs that are developmentally sequenced, topically linked, and involve building upon skills and knowledge already learned with new information and training throughout the students' years in school. Also, campuses need to align their programs for the coming year with the new federal guidelines and with their campus improvement plans.
- Based upon the new Principles of Effectiveness, all SDFSC programs should establish a mission statement and a list of goals and objectives that will indicate the specific need each program fills as part of the district's SDFSC program. Long-term follow up of students is necessary as well in order for programs to be able to determine their true impact on participants.
- Continue efforts to incorporate drug and violence education (DAVE) into all district core curriculum areas.
- Incorporate resiliency factors into district curricula through skill-building opportunities (e.g., decision making, goal setting, participation in positive activities).
- While all SDFSC programs showed positive outcomes, long-term impact has been difficult to establish. Continuous student tracking systems should be established in order to accurately assess the true effect of each program on student participants.
- Qualitative evaluation efforts should continue and be expanded so as to gain SDFSC program impact information from more students and staff/administrators.
- Revisit the district's prevention/education plan. District staff and others need to ensure all elements of the plan are being implemented. In addition, some consideration should be given to possible revisions or modifications regarding reaching year 2000 goals.

# APPENDICES

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# APPENDIX A: FEDERAL GUIDELINES FOR USE OF SDFSC FUNDS

## NON-REGULATORY GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTING PART B OF THE DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT OF 1986 – NOVEMBER 1992

3.03 ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

Funds shall be used to implement age-appropriate drug education and drug abuse prevention programs for grades EC through 12. Funds may be used for:

1. the development, acquisition, and implementation of elementary and secondary school drug abuse education and prevention curricula and textbooks and materials, including audio-visual materials
   - developed from the most readily available, accurate, and up-to-date information; and
   - which clearly and consistently teach that illicit drug use is WRONG AND HARMFUL;
2. school-based programs of drug abuse prevention and early intervention (other than treatment), which
   - should, to the extent practicable, employ counselors whose sole duty is to provide drug abuse prevention counseling to students;
   - may include the use of drug-free older students as positive role models and instruction relating to
     a. self-esteem;
     b. drugs and drug addiction;
     c. decision-making and risk-taking;
     d. stress management techniques; and
     e. assertiveness;
   - may bring law enforcement officers into the classroom to provide anti-drug information and positive alternatives to drug use, including decision-making and assertiveness skills; and
   - in the case of a local education agency that determines it has served all students in all grades, such local education agency may target additional funds to particularly vulnerable age groups, especially those in grades 4 through 9.
3. family drug abuse prevention programs, including education for parents to increase awareness about the symptoms and effects of drug use through the development and dissemination of appropriate educational materials;
4. drug abuse prevention and intervention counseling programs (which counsel that illicit drug use is wrong and harmful) for students, parents, and immediate families, including professional and peer counselors and involving the participation (where appropriate) of parents, other adult counselors, and reformed abusers, which may include
   - the employment of counselors, social workers, psychologists, or nurses who are trained to provide drug abuse prevention and intervention counseling; or
   - the provision of services through a contract with a private nonprofit organization that employs individuals who are trained to provide such counseling;

5. outreach activities, drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention programs, and referral services for school dropouts;
6. guidance counseling programs and referral services for parents and immediate families of drug and alcohol abusers;
7. program of referral for drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation;
8. programs of inservice and preservice training in drug and alcohol abuse prevention for teachers, counselors, other school personnel, athletic directors, public service personnel, law enforcement officials, judicial officials, and community leaders;
9. programs in primary prevention and early intervention, such as the interdisciplinary school-team approach;
10. community education programs and other activities to involve parents and communities in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse;
11. public education programs on drug and alcohol abuse, including programs utilizing professionals and former drug and alcohol abusers;
12. model alternative schools for youth with drug problems that address the special needs of such students through education and counseling; and
13. on-site efforts in schools to enhance identification and discipline of drug and alcohol abusers, and to enable law enforcement officials to take necessary action in cases of drug possession and supplying of drugs and alcohol to the student population;
14. special programs and activities to prevent drug and alcohol abuse among student athletes, involving their parents and family in such drug and alcohol abuse prevention efforts, and using athletic programs and personnel in preventing drug and alcohol abuse among students; and
15. in the case of a local education agency that determines that it provides sufficient drug and alcohol abuse education during regular school hours, after-school programs that provide drug and alcohol abuse education for school-aged children, including children who are unsupervised after school, and that may include school-sponsored sports, recreational, educational, or instructional activities (local education agency may make grants or contracts with nonprofit community-based organizations that offer sports, recreation, education, or child care programs); and
16. other programs of drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention, consistent with the purposes of this part. [Ref. P.L. 101-647, Sec. 5125 (a)]

A local or intermediate education agency or consortium may receive funds under this part for any fiscal year covered by an application under section 4126 approved by the state education agency.

**SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT OF 1994: SEC. 4116. LOCAL DRUG AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

b. Authorized Activities. – A comprehensive drug and violence prevention program carried out under this subpart may include –

1) age-appropriate, developmentally based drug prevention and education programs for all students, from the preschool level through grade 12, that address the legal, social, personal and health consequences of the use of illegal drugs, promote a sense of individual responsibility, and provide information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illegal drugs;

2) programs of drug prevention, comprehensive health education, early intervention, pupil services, mentoring, or rehabilitation referral, which emphasize students' sense of individual responsibility and which may include –

a) the dissemination of information about drug prevention;

b) the professional development of school personnel, parents, students, law enforcement officials, judicial officials, health service providers and community leaders in prevention, education, early intervention, pupil services or rehabilitation referral; and

c) the implementation of strategies, including strategies to integrate the delivery of services from a variety of providers, to combat illegal alcohol, tobacco and drug use, such as –

i. family counseling;

ii. early intervention activities that prevent family dysfunction, enhance school performance, and boost attachment to school and family; and

iii. activities, such as community service and service-learning projects, that are designed to increase students' sense of community;

3) age-appropriate, developmentally based violence prevention and education programs for all students, from the preschool level through grade 12, that address the legal, health, personal, and social consequences of violent and disruptive behavior, including sexual harassment and abuse, and victimization associated with prejudice and intolerance, and that include activities designed to help students develop a sense of individual responsibility and respect for the rights of others, and to resolve conflicts without violence;

4) violence prevention programs for school-aged youth, which emphasize students' sense of individual responsibility and may include –

a) the dissemination of information about school safety and discipline;

b) the professional development of school personnel, parents, students, law enforcement officials, judicial officials, and community leaders in designing and implementing strategies to prevent school violence;

c) the implementation of strategies, such as conflict resolution and peer mediation, student outreach efforts against violence, anti-crime youth councils (which work with school and community-based organizations to discuss and develop crime prevention strategies), and the use of mentoring programs, to combat school violence and other forms of disruptive behavior, such as sexual harassment and abuse, and

d) the development and implementation of character education programs, as a component of a comprehensive drug or violence prevention program, that are tailored by communities, parents and schools; and

e) comprehensive, community-wide strategies to prevent or reduce illegal gang activities;

5) supporting safe zones of passage for students between home and school through such measures as Drug- and Weapon-Free School Zones, enhanced law enforcement, and neighborhood patrols;

6) acquiring and installing metal detectors and hiring security personnel;

7) professional development for teachers and other staff and curricula that promote the awareness of and sensitivity to alternatives to violence through courses of study that include related issues of intolerance and hatred in history;

8) the promotion of before- and after-school recreational, instructional, cultural, and artistic programs in supervised community settings;

9) drug abuse resistance education programs, designed to teach students to recognize and resist pressures to use alcohol or other drugs, which may include activities such as classroom instruction by uniformed law enforcement officers, resistance techniques, resistance to peer pressure and gang pressure, and provision for parental involvement; and

10) the evaluation of any of the activities authorized under this subsection.

Table 32: 1997-98 AISD SDFSC Programs, Approved Use of Monies

| Use of Monies | Campus Programs | Alternative Programs | Pre-K to 12 Curriculum | Private Schools | DARE | PAL | ROPES | SAP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Development, acquisition, & implementation of pre-k-12 drug abuse education & prevention curricula. | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| School-based programs of drug abuse prevention & early intervention (other than treatment). | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Family drug abuse prevention | X | X | | X | | | | |
| Drug abuse prevention & intervention counseling | | X | | | | | | |
| Referral for drug abuse treatment/rehabilitation. | | X | | | | X | | X |
| Inservice & preservice training in drug/alcohol abuse prevention for teachers, counselors, etc. | X | X | X | | | | | X |
| Primary prevention & early intervention, e.g., interdisciplinary school-team. | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| Community education to involve parents & communities in fight against drug/alcohol abuse. | X | X | | X | | X | X | |
| Model alternative schools for youth with drug problems that address special needs of such students through education & counseling. | | X | | | | | | |
| On-site efforts in schools to enhance identification & discipline of drug & alcohol abusers. | X | X | | | X | | X | X |

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# APPENDIX B: SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVENESS (JULY, 1998)

**Principle 1**

A grant recipient shall base its programs on a thorough assessment of objective data about the drug and violence problems in the schools and communities served.

**Principle 2**

A grant recipient shall, with the assistance of a local or regional advisory council where required by the SDFSCA, establish a set of measurable goals and objectives, and design its programs to meet those goals and objectives.

**Principle 3**

A grant recipient shall design and implement its programs for youth based on research or evaluation that provides evidence that the programs used prevent or reduce drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior among youth.

**Principle 4**

A grant recipient shall evaluate its programs periodically to assess its progress toward achieving its goals and objectives, and use its evaluation results to refine, improve, and strengthen its program, and to refine its goals and objectives as appropriate.

Source: Federal Register, June 1, 1998, vol. 63, no. 104, pages 29901-29906.

# APPENDIX C: AISD ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION AND PREVENTION PLAN

(Revised 9/8/92)

"The need for leadership and broad participation in drug prevention is not just for a year or two, but rather for the next decade and beyond. Alcohol and tobacco, especially, will be difficult to eliminate from young people's lives-because they are legal and accepted for adults. Considering the magnitude of changes needed, it is clear that the national commitment to drug-free youth must be long term... America must redouble its efforts, and must refuse to tolerate drug use in any school, in any community, and in any home. The nation's children deserve no less." (September 1990, National Commission on Drug Free Schools, Toward a Drug Free Generation: A Nation's Responsibility)

It is the philosophy of the Austin Independent School District that the children of Austin deserve to grow and learn in a drug-free school and community. In keeping with this belief and with requirements of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, the district is implementing a comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Plan. The district's goal is to have a drug-free school population by the year 2000.

The AISD Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Plan is based upon the requirements of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-570) as amended by the Crime and Control Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-647), Section 5145. The following are the major components of this plan and will be implemented in AISD.

1. Personnel training in alcohol and drug related issues;
2. Age-appropriate alcohol and drug education and prevention curricula at each grade level (Pre-kindergarten through grade 12);
3. A student assistance program which will identify, refer, and provide intervention and counseling services for students;
4. Distribution of information about drug and alcohol programs available to students and employees;
5. Inclusion of drug and alcohol standards in discipline policies for students and personnel policies for employees; distribution of these standards to parents, students and employees;
6. Data gathering to describe the extent of alcohol and drug usage in the schools. Participation in other required evaluation efforts of the drug prevention program;
7. Assurance that all required activities convey to students that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol are wrong and harmful;
8. A district advisory council composed of individuals who are parents, teachers, officers of state and local government, medical professions, representatives of law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations and other groups with interest or expertise in the field of drug abuse education and prevention.

The district will monitor activities in each of these areas and will regularly assess and report the progress being made toward the complete elimination of drug and alcohol abuse. The district will strive to create quality educational environments for students. Local and grant resources will be used to provide training for teachers and students in positive alternatives to drug and alcohol abuse. This training will include such topics as: conflict resolution, peer assistance and tutoring, Quality Schools training for teachers and Control Theory training for students.

The central administration shall:

1. Provide administrator and employee in-service training on alcohol and other drug-related matters yearly;
2. Develop and introduce multi-component K-12 drug education and prevention programs based upon assessment of drug problems, including alcohol and tobacco, of students and staff;
3. Conduct yearly evaluations of all drug education and prevention programs and conduct school surveys every two to three years to assess drug preference and patterns of use on campus;
4. Conduct regular meetings with the district Drug-Free Schools and Communities Advisory committee to obtain information and input regarding needs and program ideas;
5. Cooperate with the Austin Police Department in the operation of the DARE (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education) program, districtwide, at grade levels 5 and 7.

Each principal shall:

1. Operate a drug and alcohol abuse prevention and education program on each campus. Information and activities designed to encourage smoking cessation and to eliminate the use of other tobacco products will be included in this program. Program activities will be documented each year through a process to be managed by the AISD Office of Program Evaluation;
2. Identify high-risk students via a Student Assistance Program and provide individuals and group support, as appropriate.

The central administration and each principal shall:

1. Coordinate with appropriate state and local drug and alcohol abuse, health, and law enforcement agencies in order to effectively conduct drug and alcohol abuse education, intervention, and referral for treatment and rehabilitation;
2. Provide information about available drug and alcohol counseling and rehabilitation and re-entry programs to students and employees;
3. Coordinate with local law enforcement agencies in order to improve security on school grounds and in the surrounding community and to educate students about: (a)

the dangers of drug use and drug-related violence; (b) the penalties for possession of or trafficking in illegal drugs; (c) techniques for resisting drug abuse; and (d) the importance of cooperating with law enforcement officials in eliminating drug abuse and identifying individuals who supply drugs to students;

4. Promulgate standards of conduct, applicable to all students and employees, which clearly prohibit the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of its activities. Clearly state that sanctions (consistent with local, state and federal law), up to and including expulsion or terminations of employment and referral for prosecution, will be imposed on students and employees who violate these standards of conduct. Parents, students, and employees will be provided with a copy of this information.
5. Maintain a comprehensive policy on: the possession, use, promotion, distribution, and sale of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. The policy should apply to students, staff, and anyone attending school functions.

District staff, students and parents shall:

Participate in appropriate learning and training activities and cooperate in efforts to eliminate drug and alcohol abuse in the Austin Independent School District.

For any programs or activities funded by AISD Drug-Free Schools and Communities (DFSC) grant, the following requirements must also be met:

Any publication or public announcement will clearly identify the program or activity as being funded in whole or part by the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986. Materials produced or distributed with funds made available under this grant must reflect the message that illicit drug use is wrong and harmful.

Technical assistance related to the implementation of this plan is available from the Division of Curriculum Support Services.

# APPENDIX D: GENESYS SUMMARIES ON AISD SDFSC PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

## DARE

Table 33: 1997-98 DARE Fifth Grade Participants

| 1997-98 All Fifth Graders | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N = 5,725 | 50% Males | 17% African-American | 19% | 8% | 15% | 12% | 17% |
| | 50% Females | 43% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 40% White/ Other | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

Table 34: 1996-97 DARE Participants-Followup in 1997-98

| 1996-97 DARE | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All 6th Graders N = 5,387 | 52% Males | 17% African-American | 51% | 11% | 12% | 9% | 17% |
| | 48% Females | 43% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 40% White/ Other | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

## PAL

Table 35: 1997-98 PALee Students

| PALees | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Elementary** | | | | | | | |
| N = 445 | 55% Males | 28% African-American | 64% | 9% | 9% | 4% | 22% |
| | 45% Females | 33% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 39% White/ Other | | | | | |
| **Middle** | | | | | | | |
| N = 291 | 53% Males | 15% African-American | 57% | 16% | 9% | 1% | 29% |
| | 47% Females | 41% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 44% White/ Other | | | | | |
| **High** | | | | | | | |
| N = 234 | 66% Males | 59% African-American | 62% | 17% | 3% | 3% | 7% |
| | 34% Females | 28% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 14% White/ Other | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

Table 36: 1997-98 PAL Students

| PALs | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Middle** | | | | | | | |
| **N = 83** | 36% Males | 13% African-American | 19% | 7% | 0% | 19% | 2% |
| | 64% Females | 24% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 63% White/ Other | | | | | |
| **High** | | | | | | | |
| **N = 234** | 36% Males | 27% African-American | 23% | 6% | 0% | 20% | 3% |
| | 64% Females | 30% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 43% White/ Other | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

## ROPES

Table 37: 1997-98 ROPES Participants

| ROPES | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Elementary** | | | | | | | |
| **N = 822** | 51% Males | 16% African-American | 73% | 7% | 19% | 9% | 18% |
| | 49% Females | 62% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 22% White/ Other | | | | | |
| **Middle** | | | | | | | |
| **N = 254** | 55% Males | 40% African-American | 69% | 24% | 10% | 6% | 11% |
| | 45% Females | 46% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 15% White/ Other | | | | | |
| **High** | | | | | | | |
| **N = 37** | 46% Males | 14% African-American | 51% | 24% | 0% | 3% | 30% |
| | 54% Females | 57% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 30% White/ Other | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

Table 38: 1996-97 ROPES Participants- Followup in 1997-98

| ROPES | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Elementary** | | | | | | | |
| N = 1,253 | 51% Males | 19% African-American | 60% | 11% | 11% | 6% | 16% |
| | 49% Females | 50% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 31% White/ Other | | | | | |
| Middle | | | | | | | |
| N = 389 | 51% Males | 31% African-American | 49% | 18% | 3% | 8% | 14% |
| | 49% Females | 38% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 31% White/ Other | | | | | |
| High | | | | | | | |
| N = 200 | 58% Males | 36% African-American | 51% | 47% | .4% | 6% | 9% |
| | 42% Females | 42% Hispanic | | | | | |
| | | 22% White/ Other | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

## SUPER I

Table 39: 1997-98 SUPER I Completers – Middle School

| SUPER I | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education | Attendance Rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Middle** | **64%** Males | **7%** African-American | | | | | | |
| N = 74 | | | 35% | 23% | 8% | 4% | 12% | Fall 93% |
| | 36% Females | 46% Hispanic | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | Spring 88% |
| | | 47% White/ Other | | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

Table 40: 1997-98 SUPER I Non-Completers – Middle School

| SUPER I | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education | Attendance Rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Middle** | **69%** Males | **10%** African-American | | | | | | |
| N = 52 | | | 33% | 31% | 10% | 2% | 27% | Fall 88% |
| | 31% Females | 62% Hispanic | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | Spring 80% |
| | | 29% White/ Other | | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

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Table 41: 1997-98 SUPER I Completers – High School

| SUPER I | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education | Attendance Rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **High** | **78%** Males | **14%** African-American | | | | | | |
| **N = 167** | | | | | | | | Fall 86% |
| | 22% Females | 46% Hispanic | 38% | 48% | 3% | 7% | 17% | |
| | | | | | | | | Spring 82% |
| | | 40% White/ Other | | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

Table 42: 1997-98 SUPER I Non-Completers – High School

| SUPER I | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Gifted/ Talented | Special Education | Attendance Rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **High** | **78%** Males | **25%** African-American | | | | | | |
| **N = 64** | | | | | | | | Fall 80% |
| | 22% Females | 42% Hispanic | 45% | 52% | 6% | 0% | 28% | |
| | | | | | | | | Spring 72% |
| | | 33% White/ Other | | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

## Positive Families

Table 43: 1997-98 Positive Families Completers – Middle School

| Positive Families | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Special Education | Gifted/ Talented | Attendance Rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Middle** | | **14%** Asian-American | | | | | | |
| **N = 7** | 100% Males | | 29% | 57% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 91% Fall |
| | | 43% Hispanic | | | | | | 86% Spring |
| | | 43% White/ Other | | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

Table 44: 1997-98 Positive Families Non-completers – Middle School

| Positive Families | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Special Education | Gifted/ Talented | Attendance Rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Middle** | | **21%** African-American | | | | | | |
| **N = 23** | 67% Males | | 79% | 38% | 0% | 21% | 4% | 85% Fall |
| | | 67% Hispanic | | | | | | 80% Spring |
| | 33% Females | 13% White/ Other | | | | | | |

*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

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Table 45: 1997-98 Positive Families Completers – High School

| Positive Families | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Special Education | Gifted/ Talented | Attendance Rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **High** | | **29%** African-American | | | | | | |
| **N = 7** | 86% Males | | 0% | NA* | 0% | 0% | NA* | 76% Fall |
| | | 14% Hispanic | | | | | | |
| | 14% Females | | | | | | | 84% Spring |
| | | 57% White/ Other | | | | | | |

*NA = This data unavailable.
*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

Table 46: 1997-98 Positive Families Non-completers – High School

| Positive Families | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Special Education | Gifted/ Talented | Attendance Rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **High** | | **25%** African-American | | | | | | |
| **N = 12** | 83% Males | | 25% | NA* | 0% | 33% | NA* | 78% Fall |
| | | 25% Hispanic | | | | | | |
| | 17% Females | | | | | | | 71% Spring |
| | | 50% White/ Other | | | | | | |

*NA = This data unavailable.
*Source: GENESYS and AISD Student Master Files*

**Summer Success**

Table 47: Summer Success 1998 Participants

| Summer Success | Gender | Ethnicity | Low Income | Overage for Grade | LEP | Special Education or Gifted/ Talented | Attendance Rates | Discipline Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Middle (N = 142) | 59% Males<br>41% Females | 21% African-American<br>73% Hispanic<br>6% White/ Other | 80% | 37 | 11% | 20% Special Ed.<br>3% Gifted/ Talented | 91% Fall<br>87% Spring | 18% Fall<br>30% Spring |

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